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September 2002

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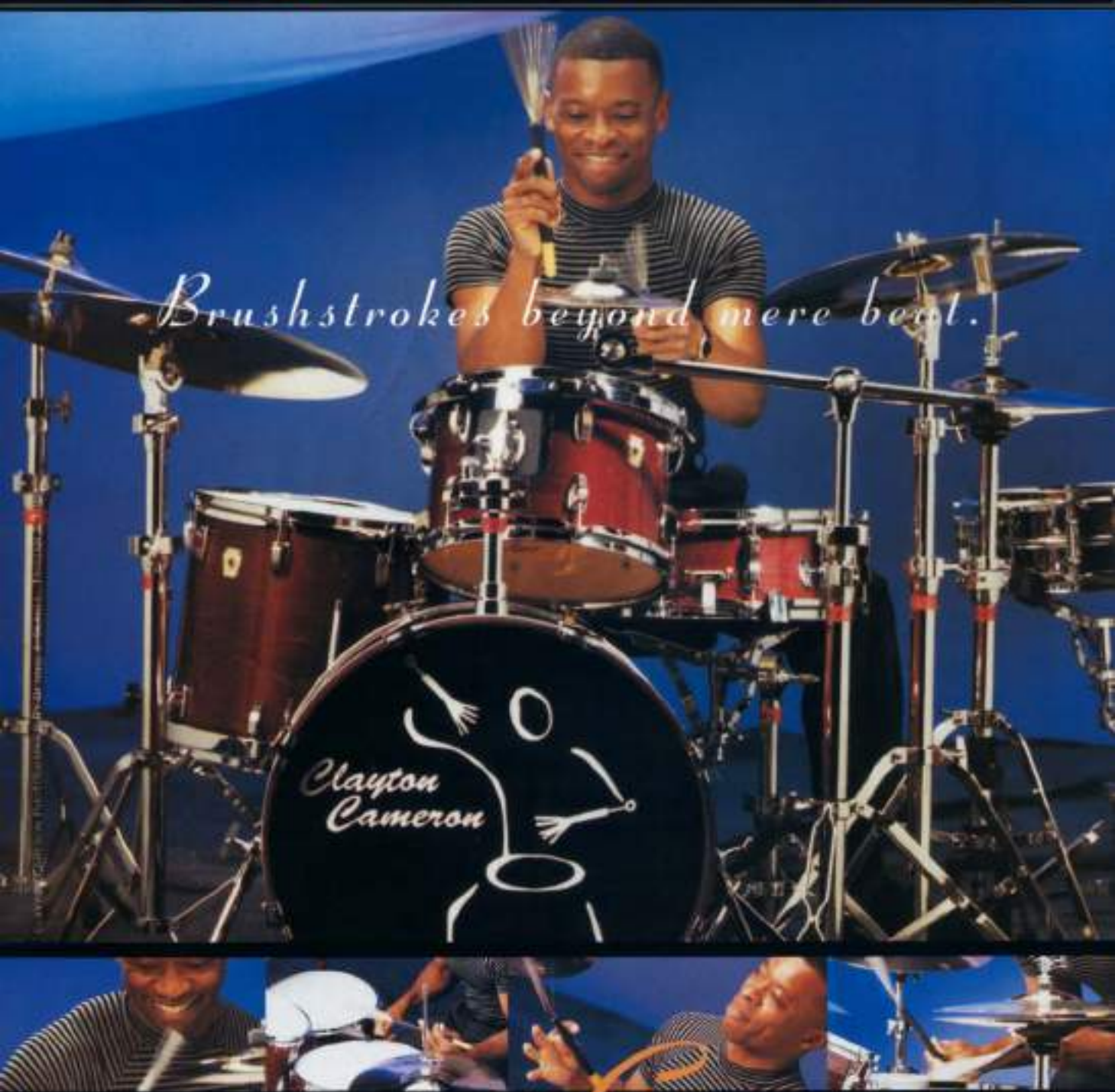

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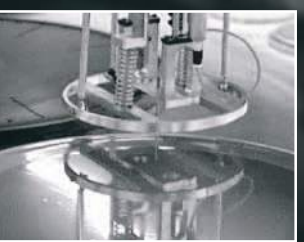

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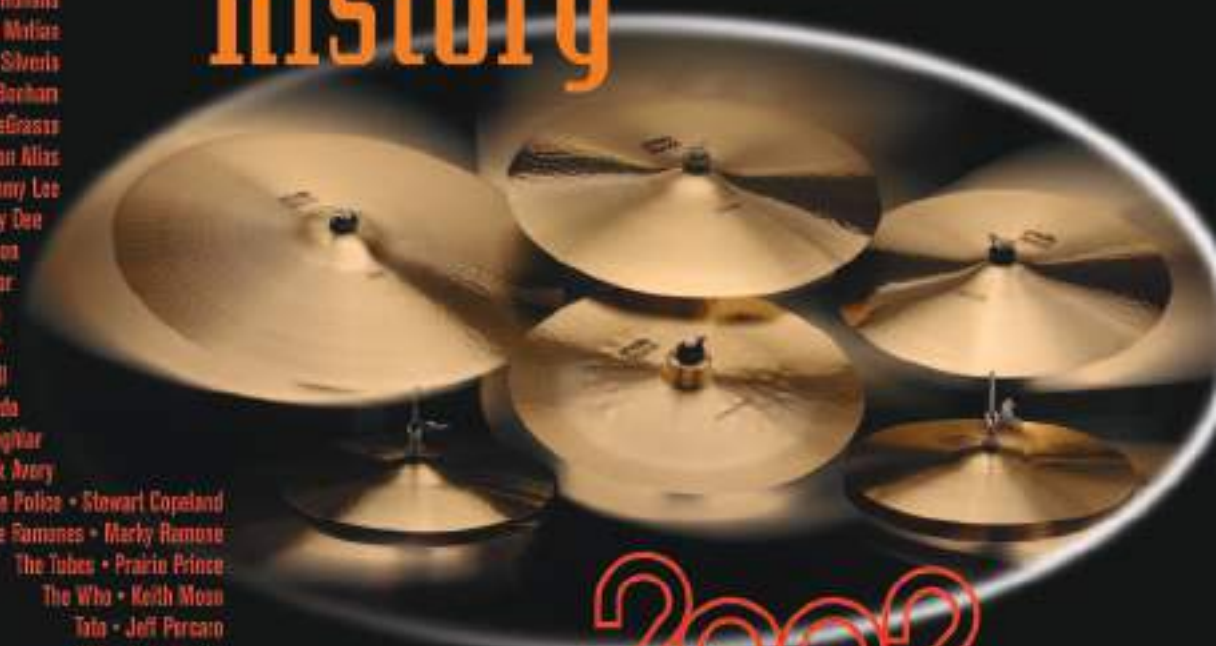

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Contents

Volume 26, Number 9

Cover photo by Andrew MacNaughtan

RUSH'S
NEIL PEART 58

When you're one of the most scrutinized and obsessed-over musicians of your generation, a five-year absence from the scene is profound. Now, with the release of *Vapor Trails*, Neil Peart and Rush return, bringing with them the scars of tragedy, and the wonder of rebirth.
by William F. Miller

SNL'S
VALERIE DEE NARANJO 72

"The most compelling music comes from a powerful community." New York percussionist Valerie Dee Naranjo might not be speaking of the gleaming city when she says that, but it sure goes far to explain her deeply musical gifts.
by Lauren Vogel Weiss

BLUE NOTE ACE
ERIC HARLAND 86

An uneasy childhood couldn't keep Eric Harland from becoming one of today's most exciting jazz drummers, backing giants like McCoy Tyner, Betty Carter, and Terence Blanchard.
by Ken Micallef

SOUND ADVICE: STAGE MONITORING FOR DRUMMERS 144

You can't expect to communicate your musical vision if you can't *hear* yourself. Nine top drum stars, from studio legend Jim Keltner to Train super-groover Scott Underwood, share tips on this vital topic.
by Mike Haid

UPDATE 28
Tommy Lee
Jeff "Tain" Watts
Moth's Atom Willard
Gina Schock Of The Go-Go's
Chuck E. Weiss
Skeebo Knight

SPOTLIGHT 132
Vic Firth, Inc.

As a recent visit to the Vic Firth factory proved, a lot more than meets the eye goes into making the simple, elegant drumstick. Plus: A concise breakdown of Firth's mind-bending variety of sticks and accessories.
by Rick Van Horn

MD GIVEAWAY 114
Win A Custom Drumkit From Spaun Drums, Along With A Set Of Handmade Turkish Cymbals!

Education

70 Off The Record
Rush's Neil Peart: Vapor Trails
by Ed Breckenfeld

102 Drum Soloist
Max Roach: "Jodi's Cha Cha"
Transcribed by Dave Miele

106 Latin Symposium
Songo: The "Jazz" Of Cuban Drumming
by Maria Martinez

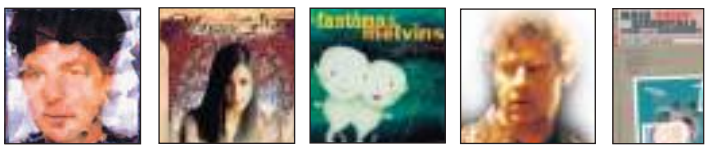
108 The Musical Drummer
Understanding The Language Of Music, Part 12: Chord Extensions
by Ron Spagnardi

112 Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic
Strenthening Your Feet
by Rod Morgenstein

116 Jazz Drummers' Workshop
Feathering The Bass Drum: The Power Of Subtlety
by Phillip Smith

120 The Jobbing Drummer
Drumming & Singing: Double Skills Make You Doubly Valuable
by Stephan S. Nigohosian

124 Slightly Offbeat
A Wedding Drummer's Warning
by Mike Brennan



Page 158

Departments

10 An Editor's Overview
A Few Rotten Apples
by Ron Spagnardi

12 Readers' Platform

18 Ask A Pro
Terry Bozzio, Mike Mangini, and JR Robinson

22 It's Questionable

156 On The Move

158 Critique

162 Backbeats
International Drum Festivals and more

168 Drum Market
Including Vintage Showcase

176 Drumkit Of The Month

Page 46

Equipment

38 New And Notable

46 Product Close-Up
Drum Workshop Collector's Series Birch Drumkit
by Kevin D. Osborne

48 Meinl Professional Series Wood Congas
by Norman Arnold

50 Vater Sugar Maple And Player's Design Sticks
by Chap Ostrander

52 Custom Showcase: Scan-Beat Pedals
by Chap Ostrander

54 Tama Kenny Aronoff Trackmaster Limited Edition Signature Snare
by T. Bruce Wittet

Page 38

55 Regal Tip Thai Sticks
by Rick Mattingly

126 Shop Talk
Building Your Own Drumset, Part 2: Obtaining Your Parts
by Paul Bielewicz

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Completely Custom. Totally Handmade. Pearl Drums.

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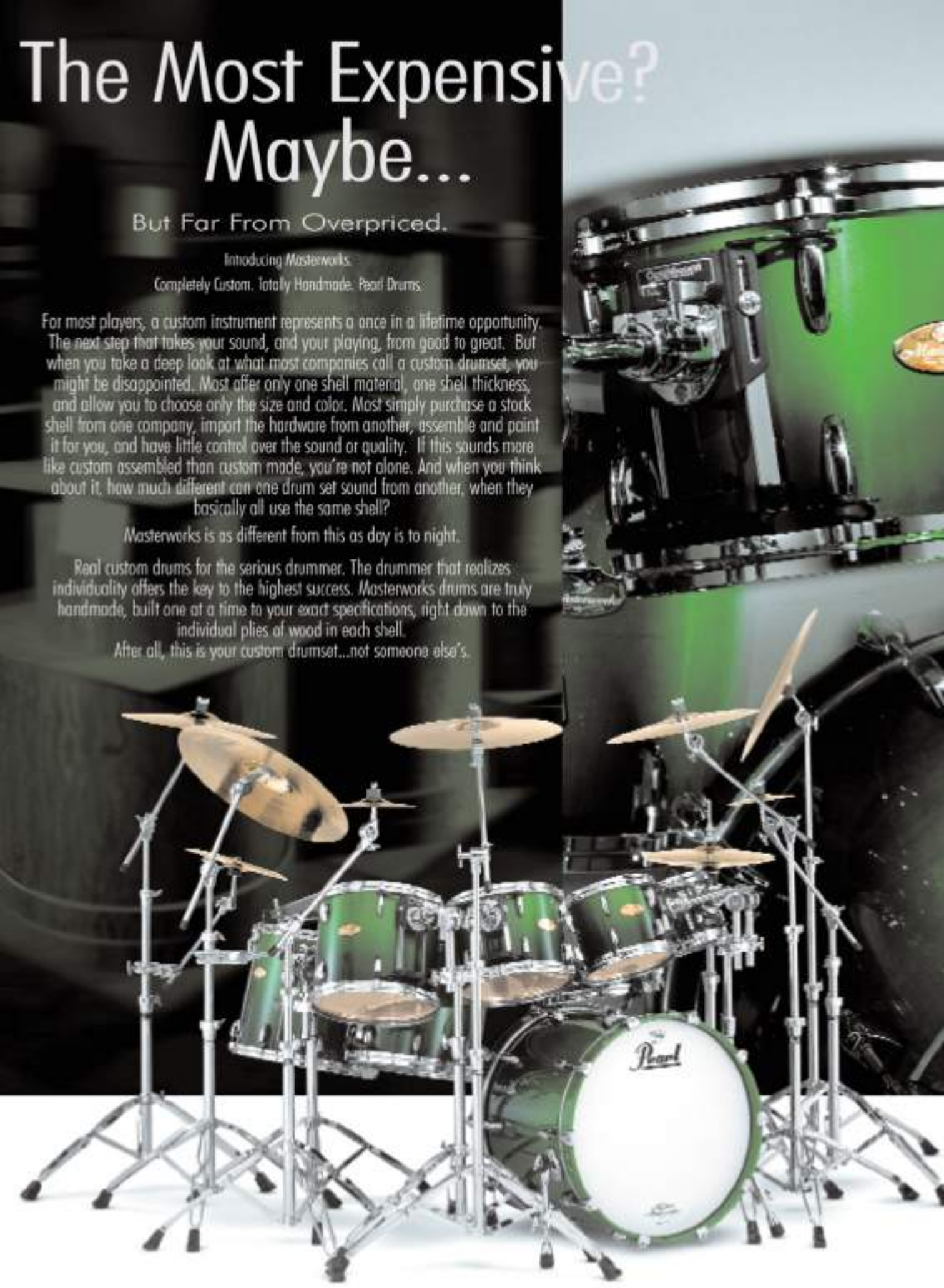

With no assembly line boundaries and no mass production compromises, Masterworks drums truly represent all that is possible. Each drum is a work of art, constructed by seamlessly blending the artisan qualities and experienced wisdom of hand craftsmanship, with the cutting edge technology and precision of state-of-the-art custom built machinery.

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See www.pearldrum.com for more details.

About The Kit Above

The Masterworks kit featured above and to the left features thin 4 ply/5mm shells comprised of 2 inner plies of African Mahogany and 2 outer plies of North American Maple, with a stunning Green Fade Pearl finish. Sizes chosen are 22"x18" Bass Drum, 8"x7", 10"x8", 10"x9", 13"x11", 14"x13", 16"x14" Toms, and a matching 13"x4" Snare Drum.

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Masterworks is About Choice...Yours.

The choices available with a Pearl Masterworks kit seem endless and it all starts with the shell. Few factors influence the sound of your drums more than the quality and choice of wood used to construct the shell. With Masterworks, the shell is custom made to your specs, not pulled from a shelf.

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Custom Made Shells to Your Specifications.

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Four Shell Thickness Options

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or any Combination
for every drum.

Choose the Thickness
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6 ply, 7.5mm
8 ply, 10mm
10 ply, 12.5mm

Choose the Sizes
Most every possible size
imaginable for every drum.

Choose the Finish
Anything is possible.
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Flakes, Mattes, Opaques, plus Exotic
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Bubinga Tamo Burl Mahogany

Choose the Hardware Plating
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True 24k Gold
Black

Choose the Mounting System. the Hoops,
the Snare Strainer...With Masterworks
the options go on and on.

A Few Rotten Apples

Occasionally the other *Modern Drummer* editors and I like to peruse the forums on various drum manufacturers' Web sites. This helps us gain a clearer perspective on the needs, wants, and problems of drummers, so we can address those issues in *MD.*

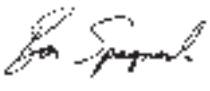
For the most part, a wealth of relevant matters is discussed on these forums. But it only takes a few rotten apples to destroy the true purpose of a forum and totally disrupt the proceedings with meaningless dialog. Unfortunately, rather than contributing something of importance, some individuals seem to get enjoyment out of demeaning their fellow drummers, instigating arguments and dissension, and stirring up unnecessary controversy.

I truly believe that education-oriented manufacturers initiate these forums so we can openly exchange important ideas and information. Apparently some people prefer to use them for their own personal vendettas against everything and anything, wasting everyone else's time in the process. One forum I recently visited contained *so* much childish banter, putdowns, foul language, and obnoxious behavior (instigated by a small minority) that I found it hard to believe these individuals actually considered themselves part of our close-knit community.

More than other instrumentalists, we drummers have always taken pride in the great relationship and common bond that exists among members of our fraternity. We've openly announced to the music world that we enjoy a special kind of camaraderie. The overwhelming number of clinics, festivals, conventions, and seminars where we assemble in a spirit of friendship each year are a testament to that. I'd sure like to see more of the conduct on these forums *reflect* that tone, rather then contradict it.

To those who choose to abuse the privilege of forum participation, how about making an effort to contribute something really *meaningful* on occasion? To those who profess to be serious players, but contribute nothing, just imagine what miraculous improvements you could make as a player if you spent one tenth of the time you're foolishly wasting...*practicing!*

If you're participating on a forum in a negative manner, well, maybe you don't really belong in our fraternity. If you have nothing of a positive nature to offer, have the courtesy to move on and allow the serious participants to use these educational tools for the purpose for which they were originally intended: the sharing of ideas about our artform—and learning something in the process.



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Anton Fig

Thanks for the excellent cover interview with Anton Fig in the June 2002 issue. Anton is such a professional, who realizes where he came from and what it took to get to where he is now. I especially enjoyed his viewpoints on the recording process (today versus yesterday) and his perspective on working with others. Anton's insights can help players at any level, and his humility is admirable. It's features like this that really make this magazine worth the subscription price.

Will DeBouver
via Internet

The Joy Of The Journey

I just finished reading Steen Jorgensen's "The Joy Of The Journey" in your June issue. I've never read a story that hit home as hard as this one has! I'm fifty-three, and I've been a drummer since I was ten. I still worship the "heroes," I still work on technique and reading, and I still appreciate the equipment.

Here's to all of us who continue to play and love drums! Thanks, Steen, for writing such an inspirational piece.

Randy Charles
via Internet

Steen's article is one of the best I've ever read. It should be hung up in every drummer's practice room!

Terry McGrath
via Internet

Indonesian Inaccuracy

I really enjoy *MD*, but I'd like to correct a mistake in the *Update* section of your June issue. The article titled "Asa-Chang & Junray—Tabla Tokyo Style" states, "Asa-Chang says his tabla-bongo is an adaptation of the Indonesian 'dandud' bongo that emerged in Jakarta...." There's no such thing as "dandud" music in Indonesia. There is, however, a very popular style called "dangdut." I believe this is what was being referred to.

Yana Cakep
from Indonesia, via Internet

Claudio Slon

The passing of Claudio Slon is very sad news. A great legend has left us. Claudio taught me—directly and indirectly—many things while he was with Sergio Mendes years ago. One was how to play using sensitive dynamics while grooving with fire.

Claudio's humor and his smile will always be in my memory. He will be alive in my drumming as long as I live.

Walfredo Reyes Jr.
Sylmar, CA

Reader Response

Editor's note: Over the years, letters printed in *Reader's Platform* have occasionally created controversy. But never in *MD*'s history has there been such a deluge of reader response as was generated by three letters in the June 2002 issue.

To recap briefly, Eric Stretz's letter criticized *MD* and writer Robyn Flans for "blatantly leaving out [the] very important fact [that] Creed is a Christian band" from Scott Phillips' March cover story, and not allowing Scott to express his Christian views. John Broderick and Matt Derry objected to Joey Jordison's image on the cover of the January issue. Matt suggested that Joey should have been pictured without his mask, to focus on his music instead of his image.

John was moved to cancel his subscription, stating that he couldn't allow anything in his home that would frighten his infant daughter. He also expressed concern over a pentagram displayed on Charlie Benante's drumhead in a previous issue, as well as the fact that Travis Barker's inclusion in the magazine might promote "teens running around naked" because of a Blink-182 video.

The following is a representative sampling of the comments—pro and con—that have filled our mailbox since the June issue was released.

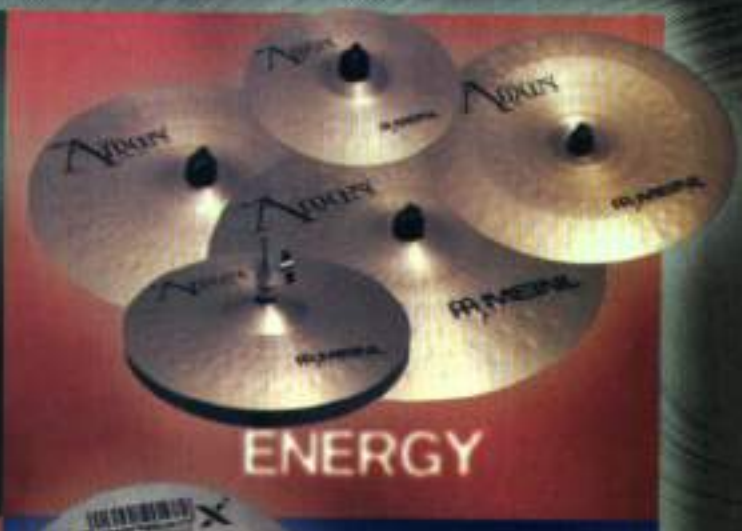
In response to Eric Stretz's letter, I would like to clarify several points. In a Q&A session in the FAQ section of Creed's Web site (www.creed.com), frontman Scott Stapp is specifically asked, "Is Creed a Christian band?" He replies, "...this is a question we are asked a lot because of some of the references made in the lyrics. No, we are not a Christian band...." That is why the introduction of my interview with Scott Phillips did *not* include any mention of the band's "Christian" nature. I pride myself on the extensive research I do before conducting an interview. I would not be so remiss as to overlook an important point such as that, were it true.

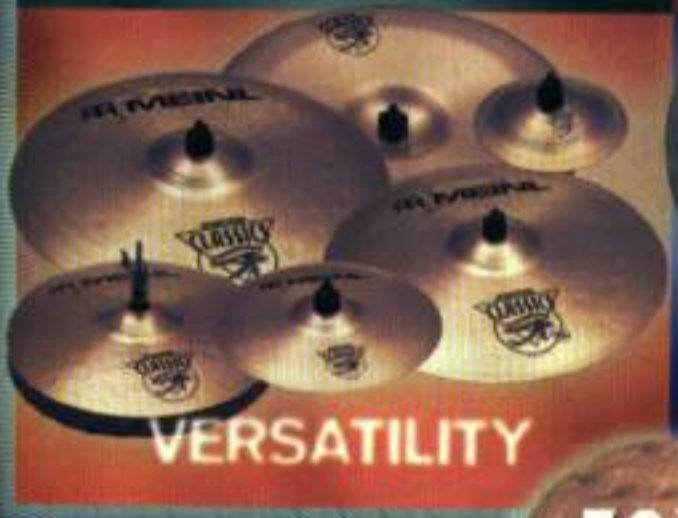
I am also proud that *Modern Drummer*, which is a *drum* magazine, *still* allows its writers the latitude to explore more than the technical aspects of playing, and to broach such topics as philosophy and religion. In my nearly twenty-five years with the magazine I have included those topics in interviews with drummers in Christian bands, as well as with Christian drummers in secular bands. Be assured that *had* it been applicable, I would have been happy to discuss Creed's Christian nature with Scott Phillips, and *MD* would have been happy to print that discussion.

Robyn Flans
Agoura Hills, CA

Joey Jordison's mask may be haunting, but its purpose is not purely image. The mask is a way to detract from the indi-

Meinl. Have It All!





John „Jabo" Starks
The Funkmasters

Marco Minnemann
Illegal Alien

Thomas Lang
Independent

Johnny Rabb
Independent

Nick D'Virgilio
Spock's Beard

Clyde Stubblefield
The Funkmasters

Joe Morris
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vidual musician and put focus on the music (as is the assignment of numbers to bandmembers in lieu of names). It is also a way for the members of the band to be Slipknot on stage, and something else in day-to-day life.

Anthrax's pentagram may have some satanic connotations, but it is also a popular symbol with people who don't even believe in Satan. Furthermore, it has also appeared on the bass drums of several other artists (including Rush's Neil Peart) who gathered no complaints. And though Blink-182 is seen running naked through the streets in a music video, I doubt this has caused a dramatic increase of streakers in America.

While the image, convictions, or religion of an artist may *influence* their music, it is still the music that counts. The fact is that Jordison, Barker, and Benante appeared in *MD* because they are excellent drummers. After all, in the words of Mr. Broderick, good drumming sells itself.

Nick Henry
Dallas, Texas

Mr. Broderick: Joey Jordison's appearance and Slipknot's music *are* somewhat disturbing. But Joey's playing is phenomenal. If you listen for even a brief second, you'd know why Stewart Copeland went out and bought a double pedal.

Mr. Derry: Depicting Joey without his mask would be like removing some paint from a Picasso, or deleting a song off your favorite album. Every little bit goes into a work of art. Why would someone want to ruin it?

Evan Manly
via Internet

Mr. Broderick is totally out of line when condemning *Modern Drummer* for what Charlie Benante has on his kick drum heads or what Blink-182 does in their videos. *MD* never directly featured the pentagram nor condoned running around nude as a good thing. All they've done is showcase great drummers who have made a name for themselves.

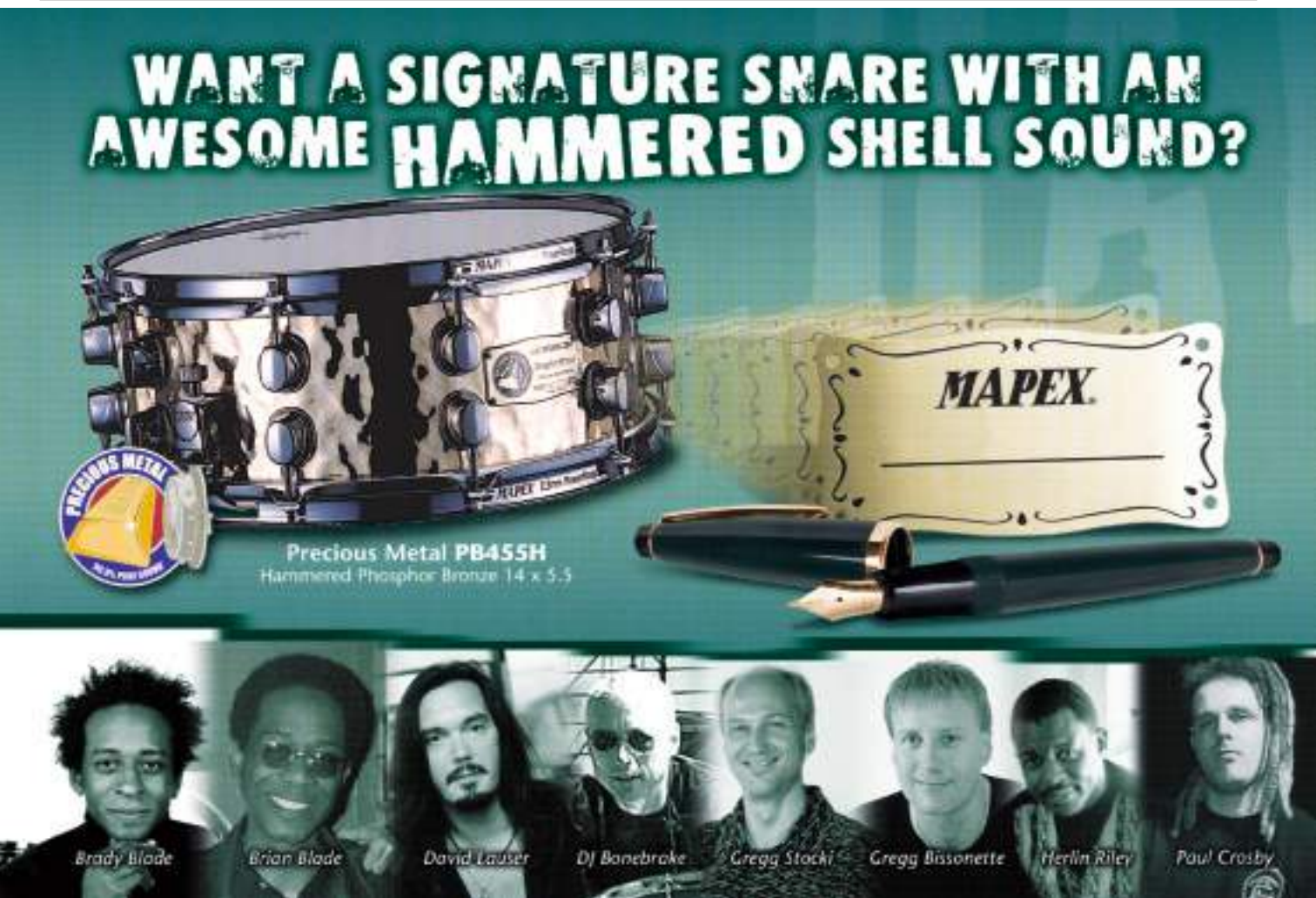
What really angers me is that Mr. Broderick and Mr. Derry can't see through the stage show to the thing that matters the most. Who cares what Joey Jordison wears, what Travis does in his videos, or what Charlie has on his heads. What matters is the music.

David Dabrowski
via Internet

Mr. Derry: Unless you plan to play drums alone in your basement forever, it would be good to remember that part of drumming is being an entertainer, not just a technician. Many people come to live shows to *watch* as well as to listen. In a live show, the senses of sight and sound together can be much greater than the sum of their parts. I, for one, would like to know how other drummers exploit this symbiotic relationship.

Mike Kleiner
via Internet

As a longtime reader, I've known *Modern Drummer* to promote only one thing: drumming. The magazine has never been a forum for religion nor a pawn of sensationalism. I have only ever found in it a strong pursuit of the



merits of drummers and their craft. I will continue to stand by *MD*, and I feel sorry for those musicians who lack the open mind to do so as well.

Troy
via Internet

I'll give John Broderick the fact that Louie Bellson is timeless and has given drummers something to aspire to. But hey, the times are changing. Travis Barker from Blink-182 could more than likely play Mr. Broderick under the table, and I'd pay to see it. And if Matt Derry wants passion in music, perhaps he should *listen* to Slipknot before passing judgement.

Closed-mindedness comes in a lot of guises. Personally, I think there is room for self-expression in *all* forms, whether it be running around naked, wearing masks, or playing some of the best drums around.

Mike Edwards
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

I'm sixteen years old, and I'm interested in modern drummers who play the music that I like to listen to. If all the young drummers now only listened to drummers from Louie Bellson's time, the evolution of drumming would become stagnant.

Bryan Nicholas
via Internet

I'm a Christian, and the aforementioned cover and pentagram did bother me. So what I did was black out the pictures and draw a small cross on the cover. Then I prayed over it.

MD has been there to help my drumming career with educational material and informative articles. When it comes down to it, the good outweighs the bad. I don't condone nor listen to Slipknot or Anthrax. But I want to let Mr. Broderick know that there are other options besides canceling his subscription to this wonderful publication.

Curtis Wetherell
Houston, TX

If Mr. Broderick feels that putting a magazine out of a child's reach is "hiding it from his family," then he has his own problems to work out. I keep my *Playboy*, Drain-O, kitchen knives, condoms, and firearms out of my son's reach. I don't call it hiding; I call it protecting my child. *Modern Drummer* stays on the coffee table.

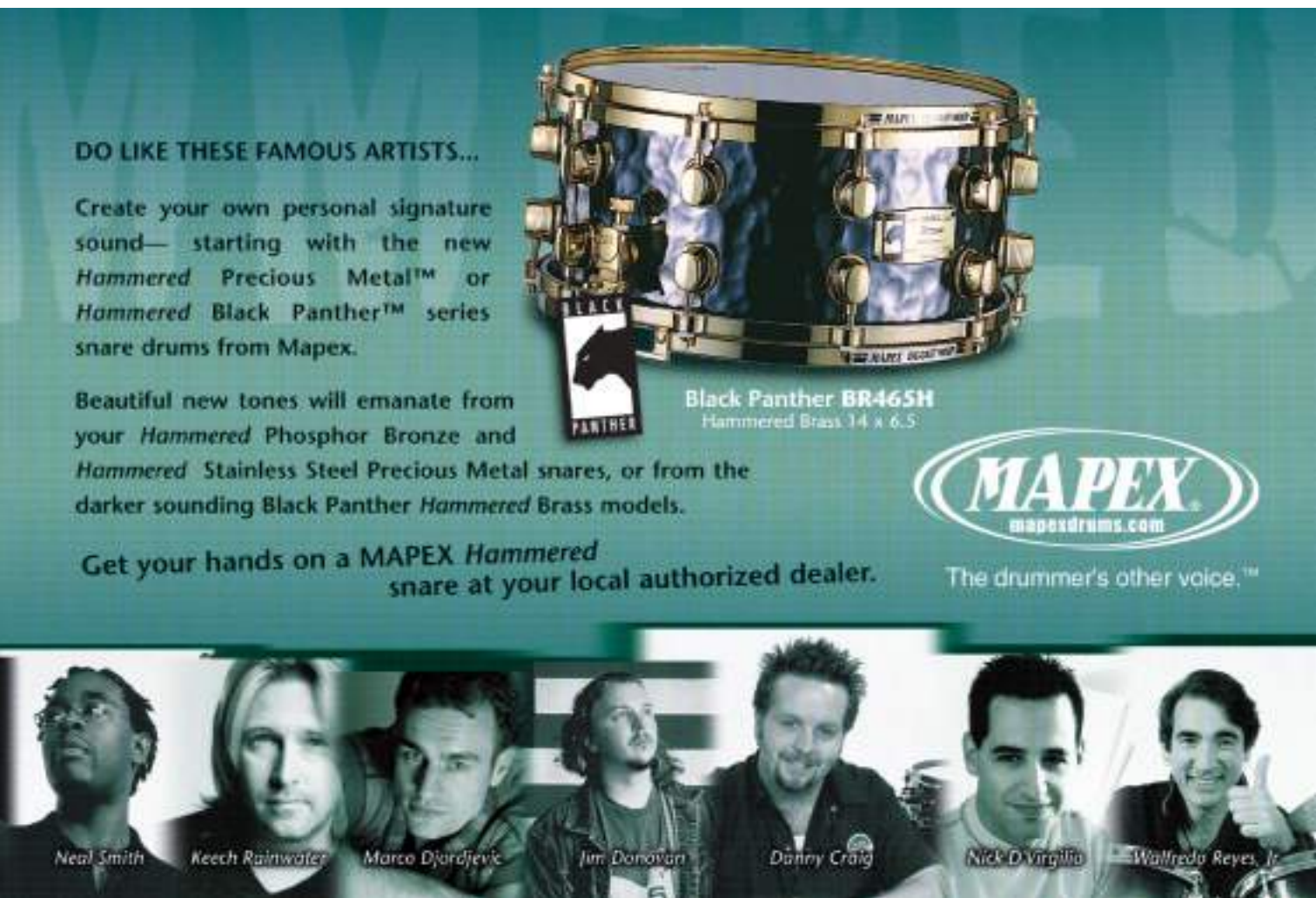
Dan F. Martin
Hollywood, CA

Have these readers forgotten that they subscribed to *Modern Drummer*, not *Stuck In The Past Drummer*? Can they really listen to players like Barker, Jordison, or Benante and *not* hear their chops? I've been drumming for over thirty years, and I'm *still* learning from my young cohorts. Missing out on something valuable due to fear of "bad influences" makes no sense. Would you not listen to Charlie Parker or Miles Davis because of their addictions?

Modern Drummer must continue to feature artists that reflect the magazine's very title. Otherwise, the rest of us will have to cancel *our* subscriptions.

Charlie Mayer
via Internet

Many thanks to John Broderick Jr. and Matt Derry for telling you what some of us think about putting photos like Jordison's on your cover. Besides the effect on very



Readers' Platform

young children that Mr. Broderick mentioned, it's just embarrassing to have such nonsense on the cover of a magazine that is supposed to provide serious information to the music profession. I suppose it's important to document the fact that such clowns exist. (My dictionary supports my use of the term.) But that fact is in no way so significant that it has to be put on the cover of the magazine.

Understandably, you have to cater to the segments of society that will buy your magazine. But you might also have the courage to display a bit of journalistic responsibility, even if it means sacrificing a few sales. I completely agree with Mr. Broderick's comments regarding the negative influences that you allow to be included in your covers.

I don't doubt the drumming talents of the individuals in these articles. But there are many, many excellent drummers to choose from. The fact that some of them get attention by looking or acting like screwballs is not newsworthy.

Dennis Gurgul
via Internet

I think people should stop obsessing about who's on the cover of *MD* and take a look *inside*. A little variety is good. And isn't it about the *drumming*?

a drummer
Bowling Green, KY

How To Reach Us

Correspondence to *MD*'s *Readers' Platform* may be sent by mail: 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, fax: (973) 239-7139, or email: rvh@moderndrummer.com.

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Setup Info And Advice From Terry Bozzio

Q I'm a fifteen-year-old boy from Norway. You're one of my biggest influences. My drum teacher gave me The Brecker Brothers album *Heavy Metal Be Bop* a few days ago. Great drumming! What kind of drum and cymbal setup did you use on that album?

Also, my dream is to be a professional drummer. My plan is to study at Musicians Institute in California. Do you have any advice?

Geir Johansen
from Norway, via Internet

Rick Van Horn

A Thanks so much for your compliments. I still think *Heavy Metal Be Bop* is one of my best recorded performances. The setup I used then was a black Gretsch kit, with 12", 13", and 14" rack toms, 16" and 18" floor toms, two 22" bass drums, and a 14" chrome snare. The cymbals were A Zildjians, including a 22" ride, 18" and 20" crashes, and a 22" China. I used a Sonor hi-hat and Camco bass drum pedals, which were the forerunners of DW pedals. I have a picture or two of that kit in the gallery section of my Web site (www.terrybozzio.com) along with other pictures showing the evolution of my kit from 1975 to the present.

I'd recommend Berklee College Of Music in Boston, Massachusetts over any other drumset-oriented school in America because I believe it offers a well-rounded curriculum and is an accredited institution (instead of a "specialty" or "vocational" school operation). However, that's just my opinion. Unfortunately, given the fact that only a handful of schools in America offer drumset instruction as a major, there aren't that many choices. Musicians Institute's success in filling this void verifies the sad situation in which we trap drummers seem to be regarded as playing an "illegitimate" instrument, and have to seek elsewhere for private instruction.

I hope that in the future all the top universities will allow majoring on the drumset. I'm in the process of writing a book for use on the college level, which I hope will help. For now, I wish you the best of luck wherever you go. Just try to absorb as much as you can!

Mike Mangini On Heads And Tuning

Q I heard about you a couple of years ago thanks to *Modern Drummer*. Then I went to a Steve Vai show, and ever since, I've been a big fan of your drumming and your educational theories. I have two questions for you. First: I have a Steve Vai video on which you play with RotoToms. What kind of heads do you use, and what is your tuning approach? Second: Can you list other projects you've worked on that you think represent your playing?

Marco M.M.
via Internet

Alex Solca

A Hi Mahhhco! (That's Bostonian for "Marco.") I use Remo Ambassador heads on everything but the bass drum, on which I use a PowerStroke 3 or PowerStroke 4. The snare heads are coated. I use coated tom heads for concerts (to reflect the heat from the lights) as well as for clinics and some recordings in rooms that have more "ring qualities" in them. Otherwise I prefer clear tom heads for clinics and recordings.

Back when I used RotoToms, I always used clear heads on them. Tuning is different on Rotos because there is just one head. On my Pearl toms, I tune the bottom head tighter than the top. Most times, one of the lugs needs to be a little tighter or looser than the rest, but there are no rules there.

The CD that best reflects my playing is *Mullmuzzler 2*. Basically, my stereo-image cymbal and hi-hat work is buried on all of the other twenty-plus CDs I'm on. I now engineer all my recordings because I'm the only one who can hear it from my perspective. Otherwise, it gets mixed from the "front view" of the engineer, who simply can't hear what I hear. Take care, and thanks for your questions.

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JR Robinson's Tips For Studio Drummers

Q I work with decent songwriters and musicians, but sometimes we don't "click" together in terms of time and feel. They tend to put most of the blame on me. Some of that is probably warranted, and I accept my share. However, I've been working with metronomes and click tracks nearly every day for over ten years. I wouldn't call my time perfect, but I feel it's pretty decent. What can I do to bridge the gap between my bandmates and me? How can I (or we) come up with the right feel for the song?

Which leads to my next set of questions: Can you give any tips to come up with "the right drum part" for a song—one that has a unique feel, yet is totally a part of the song and not "drum-istic"? Also, how do you come up with unique parts that work with rhythms and song structures that may have been used many times before?

Ryan Sapp
Boulder, CO

A As you know, the drummer is the leader of any modern band. The word "blame" should not even be brought up. Band together. It works. You can practice a lifetime with metronomes and click tracks, but it will never be the same as a band that's playing together. The band must understand what a particular song concept is, and then try to achieve it. That means full communication between bandmembers.

Sometimes it can be helpful to listen to an older recording for the concept or feel of the groove and the parts. Try to emulate these into the new song you're doing.

As the drummer, you can create the first impressions to jump-start the rest of the musicians. To do this, you must come up with grooves that you enjoy playing within your own style, and then implement them into the new song idea. Once the rest of the band is secure with your concept, they'll jump on board with flying colors.

When working with others, always think of yourself as a *musician*, not necessarily as a *drummer*. I know that sounds like the old joke, but it means you should *think* musically. Think about phrases in the music. Think about where space should be instead of a drum fill. On the Quincy Jones CD *The Dude*, there were *no* fills. The concept was the *music*. That record won six Grammys. I rest my case.

Repeat Bar
A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I don't know the difference between a mistake and a good thing. Something happened in the music and I reacted a certain way. Good? Bad? I don't know. In the moment that you're playing, you don't have the right to analyze. It's a crime against music."

Phish's **Jon Fishman**, October 2000

Would you like to ask your favorite drummer a question?

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Salvaging A Cracked Cymbal

Q I have a 16" A Zildjian thin crash that has two small cracks in it. One is just left of the Zildjian logo, the other is just to the right. They are each about 1 cm long, extending towards the cymbal's bell.

I don't have a lot of money to replace the cymbal, so I'm wondering what I can do to repair the cracks and to stop any more damage from occurring. Your help will be much appreciated.

Greg Van Buskirk
via Internet

A Zildjian director of education John King replies, "There are generally two types of scenarios when it comes to cracked cymbals. The first are cracks that occur on the outer edge of the cymbal and start to work their way straight in towards the center. This type of crack is probably the easiest to deal with, providing the right tools are available. We have found that using a stone grinding wheel to grind away a V-shaped cut around the crack can be very effective. It is necessary for the point of the V to extend beyond the end of the crack by at least 1", without going more than half the distance to the bell of the cymbal. Keep in mind that the negative effects of the crack go beyond what can be seen by the naked eye.

"Once the grinding process is complete, sand and round off all raw edges. (Be sure to use gloves, safety glasses, and all other safety measures while attempting this type of repair.) It's surprising how much of the original character of a cymbal's sound can be retained by using this method.

"The other scenario refers to cracks that become apparent within the body of the cymbal, often following the path of existing lathe lines. We call these 'smile cracks,' and they're a bit more difficult to address. The most common method is to drill a hole at either end of the crack. (This is called stop-drilling.) But more often than not, the hole is simply not big enough, due to the fact that the crack usually extends well beyond what can be seen or felt. It is necessary to drill a hole large enough to go beyond the effects of the crack (at least 1" or more). This should be done by a skilled operator using a drill press.

"Once the holes are successfully drilled, a metal-cutting saw blade should be used to cut a line over the remaining crack. This prevents chaffing of the metal edges and a resulting 'buzz.'

"I cannot stress enough that these procedures should not be attempted by anyone who is not completely familiar with the tools mentioned above. Additionally, employing the repair techniques described in no way guarantees that a cymbal will be salvaged after cracking.

"Of course, the *best* way to address damaged cymbals is to avoid that damage in the first place. Always allow your cymbals to move freely. Always strike them with a glancing motion. And remember that thin cymbals never aspire to be rock performers."

Anton's Blue Sparkle

Q I really like the blue sparkle finish on Anton Fig's Letterman-show kit. Is that a custom finish or a stock one from Yamaha? If it is a custom finish, was it done strictly for Anton, or can we "regular" drummers order it?

Daruba
via Internet

A Yamaha drum product manager Dave Jewell replies, "The kit that Anton is playing does feature a custom finish, but it is one that any drummer can special-order. We could do blue sparkle on a Maple Custom Absolute or Birch Custom Absolute set for you. It would take six to seven months (Anton had to wait, too), and it would cost 15% more than a normal finish. Contact any authorized Yamaha drum dealer and they'll be able to take care of you. Thanks for your interest in Yamaha drums."

Paul La Raia

Piccolo Snare Buzz

Q I own a 4x13 Dixon piccolo snare drum. I recently purchased new snare wires for it, and since then snares produce an extremely annoying buzz every time I hit the drum. Even a light tap on the rim creates the buzz. I've tried tightening and loosening both heads, as well as tightening the actual wires. Nothing seems to get rid of the buzz. Please give me some suggestions.

Chris Willson
via Internet

A If you didn't have this problem with the drum prior to installing the new snare wires, then those new snare wires become the primary suspect. It's possible that the individual wires within the set are not tensioned evenly. When that happens, one or more of the wires remains looser than the others, no matter how much you tighten the entire set. This will allow those one or two wires to "buzz" independently of what the other wires are doing.

The only solution to that is to replace the set.

Before you do that, however, take a moment to evaluate your situation. What you are describing is a case of extreme snare sensitivity. Realize that piccolo snare drums are noted for just that feature. Their shallow depth transfers the slightest impact vibration very quickly to the snare wires. That same shallow depth helps return the response of the snares back up to the batter head, where it is additionally resonated.

When you use a new, crisp-sounding set of snare wires, you're adding to the snare-sensitivity equation even more. So there may not be anything *wrong* with your drum or your snares. It may just be that the combination of drum, snare, and drumhead performance is more than you want.

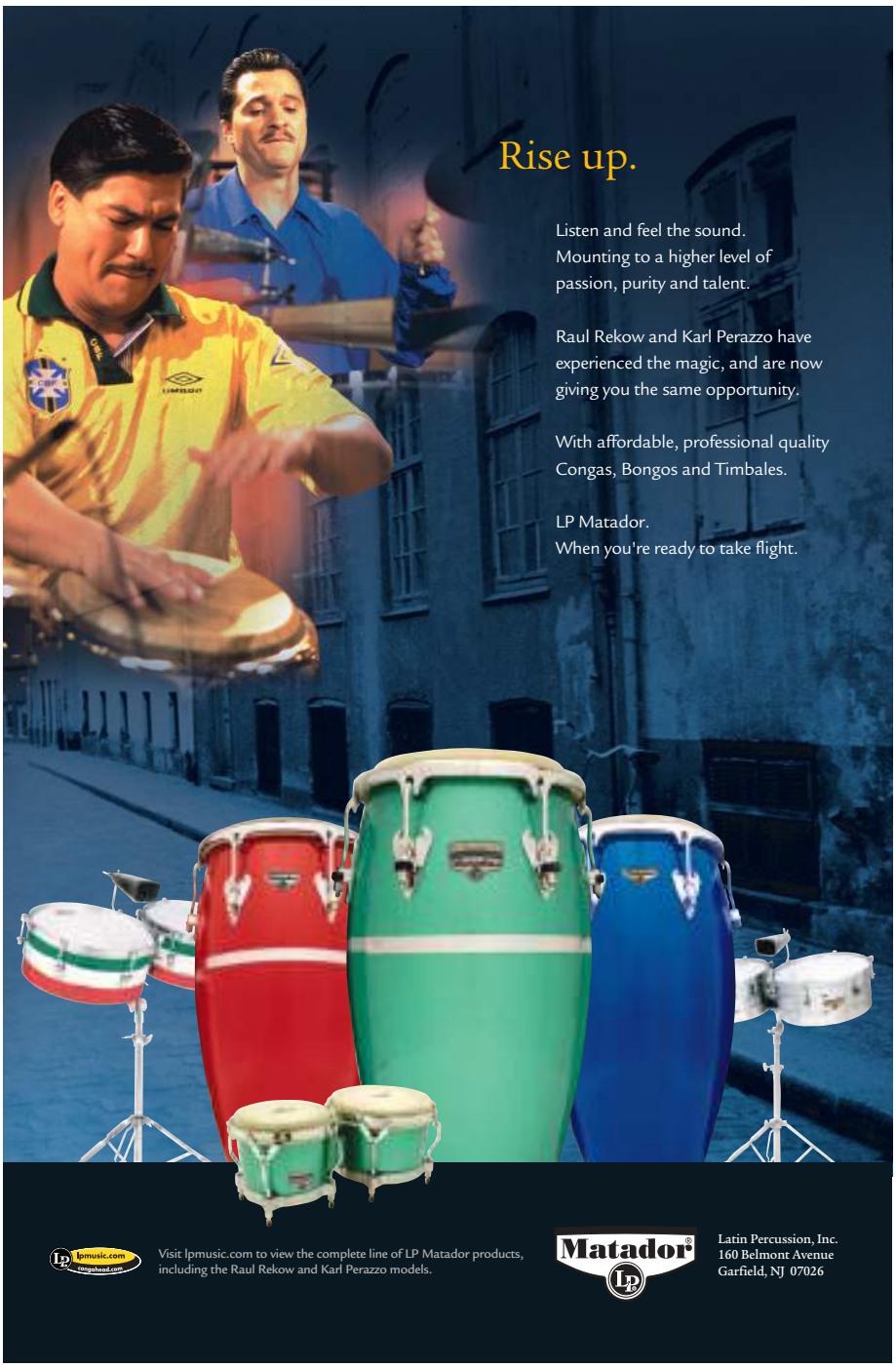
Besides the buzz-controlling techniques you've already tried, you might try muffling the snare-side head—a little at a time—using small pieces of duct tape. You could also try de-tuning the two bottom lugs on either side of the snare wires (for a total of four lugs). This reduces the snare sensitivity of the bottom head somewhat. You might need to compensate by tightening the other bottom lugs a little so as not to reduce the overall pitch of the head too much.

Some drummers reduce snare response by putting small strips of tape across the snares themselves. The point at which this is done (how far in from the edge of the drum) determines how much effect it has. It's pretty easy to experiment with. We've also heard of drummers using the narrowest Noble & Cooley Zero Rings (drum muffling devices), dropped into the shell of the drum to sit *on top of* the snare-side head. All these techniques are worth a try.

Roland V-Drum Upgrade

Q I've been using a set of Roland V-Drum Pros on stage for about a year. I spent many hours making and tweaking my own kits, and I currently use twenty-seven kits to play all the different songs that we do on any given gig. Of course, I backed up all my work on two M-512E memory cards.

I'd like to install the TDW-1 upgrade to my system. I understand that my memory cards should save my work during this changeover. What makes me leery is that when I took a card to my local music store



and plugged it into a Roland V-Session kit, that kit did not recognize my card. Can you tell me more specifically how this changeover is done and why the upgraded TD-10 wouldn't load my information?

Jhan Hansen
via Internet

MD electronics writer Rick Long responds, "Be assured that your data isn't going to be lost. In fact, all data will be loaded, with the exception of the trigger settings. (Those settings had to be updated to work with the new V-Cymbal pads.) When you attempt to load your data, a screen stating 'some data won't be loaded' will appear. This is in reference to the trigger settings. Continuing with the process past this prompt should lead to your kits being loaded into the upgraded TD-10.

"Be aware, however, that after hearing the new sounds that are available in the upgrade, you'll likely be redoing your original twenty-seven kits! Also, there is now a 'Global' output assignment setting that allows you to set the panning and output assignments one time for all fifty kits."

Thanks to Mike Snyder for help on this question.

Two-Tiered Drum Racks

Q I'm interested in which manufacturers of drum racks offer two-tiered or "cage-style" versions. I'd appreciate any information you could provide.

J. Reid
via Internet

A All tubing-style racks (Tama, Gibraltar, Yamaha, Monolith, Carbonlite, Cannon, Dixon) can be purchased as component parts, from which you can custom-create a two-tier rack to suit your own personal needs. If you're looking for an off-the-shelf "cage-style" rack package, we suggest you check with those manufacturers to see if they offer such configurations in their catalogs. Web addresses for these brands can be located by a simple name search.

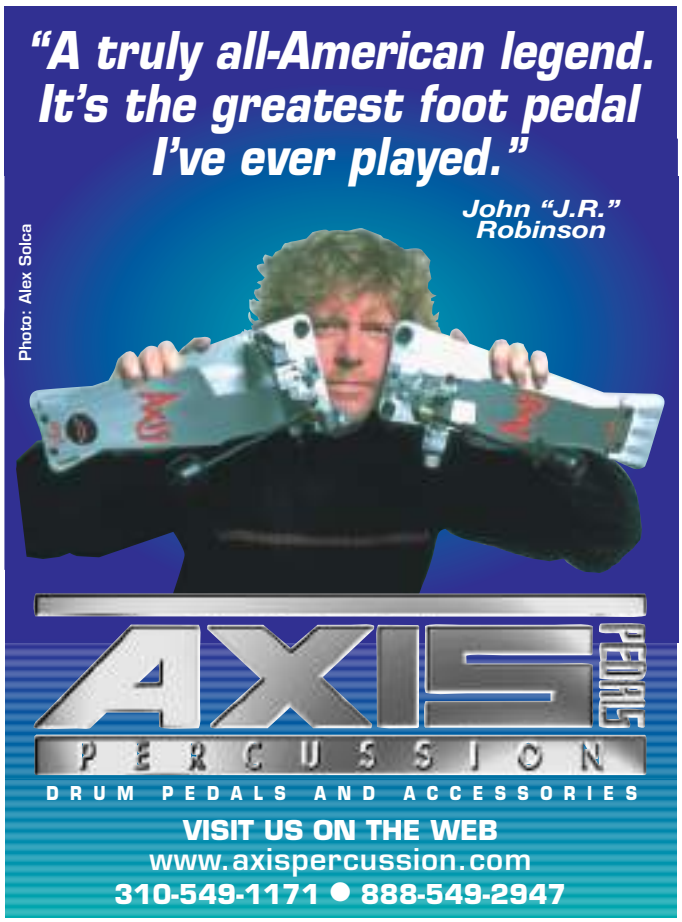
Pearl's rack system uses square horizontal tubes, but their ICON rack is supported by $1^1/_2$"-diameter tubing, which is the same used by all other tube-style rack manufacturers except Yamaha. Pearl doesn't make long tubes suitable for cage-style vertical supports, but it would be a simple matter to obtain those tubes from another manufacturer and combine them with the Pearl horizontal bars to create a two-tiered rack. Note, however, that if you choose to do that, the floor bars (the horizontal "feet" of Pearl's ICON racks) cannot be used. Their $1^1/_2$" "leg" tubes are affixed with $^7/_8$"-diameter prongs that fit into the floor bars. Gibraltar, Tama, and other similar tubing is $1^1/_2$" from end to end.

Drum Gates

Q I've been reading *MD* for a couple of years now, and I sometimes run into expressions that I can't make any sense of by using a dictionary. For example, what does it mean to "gate" the drums? I read an interview with Travis McNabb in which he said, "If I breathe on my toms I want them to open." What does that mean?

Modern Drummer touches all kinds of music, which is helpful when one is a young drummer trying to improve one's playing. So understanding an interview 100% is important to me.

Michael Vestergaard
from Denmark, via Internet



A A "gate" is an electronic device that shuts off the incoming signal from a microphone until that signal reaches a certain volume level. The object is to prevent the microphone from picking up unwanted sounds.

In the case of drums, a mic' on a given drum will be "gated" to prevent the "bleed" of sound from other drums, cymbals, or instruments. The gate will be set to open only when that particular drum is struck, and then only at a desired volume level.

Some gates can also be set to open only for a specific period of time. So when the sound of the stick hitting the drum begins to fade, the gate closes—again preventing any unwanted sounds from entering the microphone. This also controls how long the drum's sound resonates on the recording or through the sound system.

When Travis McNabb said that he wanted the gates on his toms to open "if he breathed on them," he meant that the volume sensitivity on the gates would be set very low. They would open at the slightest touch on the drums.

Why "Snare" Drum?

Q I have a simple question. How did the snare drum get the name "snare"?

Mr. James
via Internet

A As is often the case in historic nomenclature, the answer to your question is subject to debate. However, the prevailing theory is that the wire or gut strands used beneath the bottom head were thought to resemble the wires and strings used in small-animal snares. (In fact they may have first been *made* from such material.) It appeared as though such a snare had been stretched across the head, so the drum was called a "snare" drum. Please note that for many years (and still today in many European countries), what we call a "snare" drum is referred to as a "side" drum—especially in the case of marching drums.

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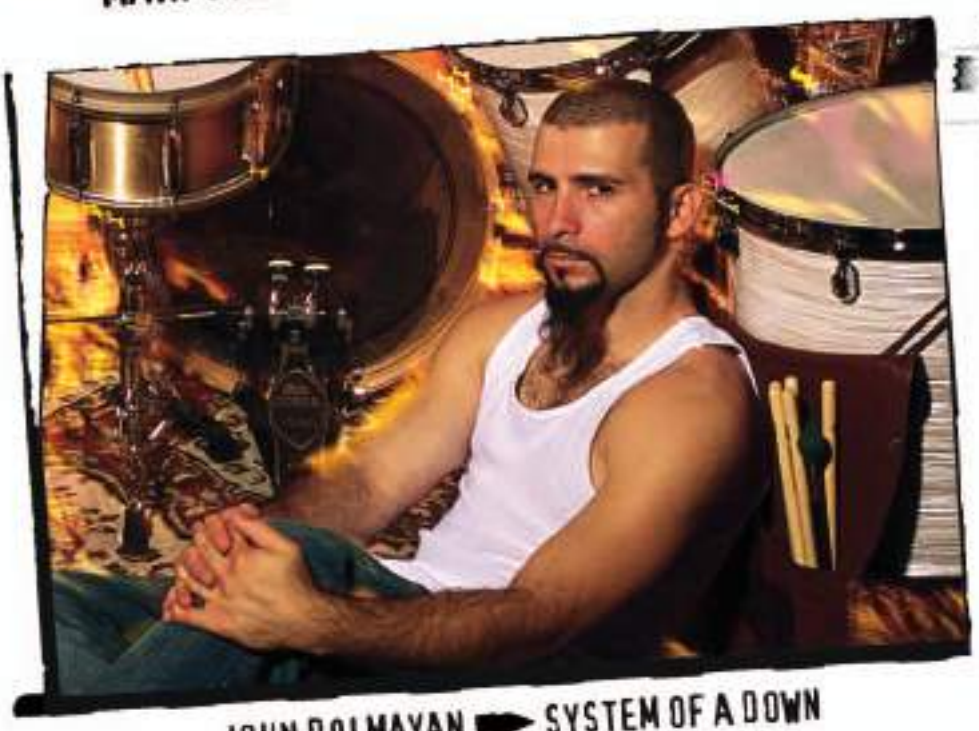
MAIN STAGE



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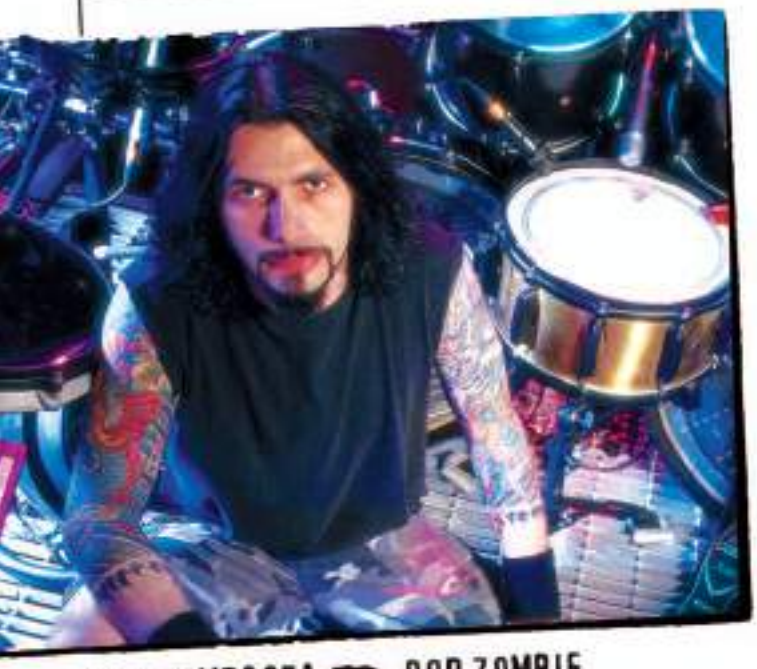

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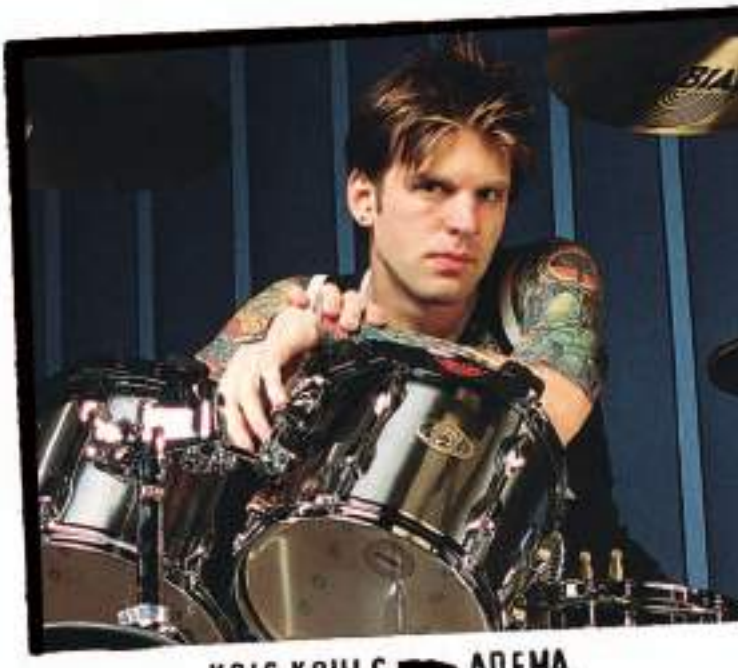

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Anything But Dull

Tommy Lee is in a great mood, and he has every reason to be. His new CD, appropriately titled *Never A Dull Moment*, is off the hook, with catchy songs, awesome guitar and vocals, and killer drum tracks. The album was co-produced, written, and played by Tommy, with some help from friends like Chino from The Deftones and Brandon and Mikey from Incubus. Tommy is currently on tour with a new band that includes Will Hunt on drums.

"Will's a bad ass. He's great!" Tommy says cheerfully. "I went through the audition process, which was interesting. And Will came in and crushed. He plays *exactly* like me. Of course he has his own style, but as far as the way he executes the power that he plays with, I was blown away. Will and I played some beats together and tried things in between the songs we were doing, and that's when I realized there are so many synchronicities between the two of us, like his foot and feel. *Everything* is so similar that it freaked me out."

So will we see and hear Tommy behind the kit on this tour? "Oh yeah!" Tommy insists. "Most of the time I'll be up front playing guitar and singing. But in the middle of the show, my girl Mayte comes out and dances during this crazy tribal/rave trip, and Will and I play some stuff that's pretty intense. That's our drum duo spotlight."

And what about all those nagging Mötley Crüe rumors? Will Tommy re-join the band? "I talk to Nikki [Sixx] a lot," Tommy admits. "We're still good buds. As far as the band goes, I'll never say never. Maybe down the line it could be possible. But right now I'm happy doing my own thing."

Don't expect Tommy to abandon his drumming or practice routine anytime soon. "I love playing drums. I just get on and play. There's no set routine. I just play whatever I feel. I'll get on at rehearsal before anyone is there or after everyone is gone and just start bashing. A lot of times I just have to look at the kit and it's like, I wanna play! I still love it. I will *always* play drums!"

For more info on Tommy, go to www.tommylee.tv.

Billy Amendola

Jeff "Tain" Watts

Back To The Bars

Three years after *Citizen Tain*, Jeff "Tain" Watts' successful solo debut, he returns with *Bar Talk*. The new disc elaborates on the melodic majesty of Tain's first effort while ratcheting up the excitement with three drum solos and metrically daring arrangements.

Bar Talk was inspired not only by Watts' increasing recognition as a modern-day master (and some serious time listening to Billy Cobham's classic *Crosswinds*), but a chance meeting with a particularly bold percussion group.

"I did a concert in 2000 at Queen Elizabeth Hall in London for the Rhythm Sticks Festival," Watts explains. "They paired my group with The Master Drummers Of Africa. Very few of them spoke English, but our concert together was very successful, and I learned something. It opened me up rhythmically, in the way they're open and free. There's a lot of logic and theory in what I play. But I always want a balance between that and the stuff I play that I really don't know what it is, where I'm just going for a sound."

Where *Citizen Tain* was enjoyable largely because of Tain's surprising way with the pen, *Bar Talk* offers simple pleasures, like the reggae-infused "Stevie In Rio." There's also a wealth of rhythmically dazzling compositions chock-full of odd meters and multiple tempos and grooves, from 6/4 funk and buzzing ska to time-tested swing. Songs such as "Mr. JJ" (featuring solos by Michael Brecker and Branford Marsalis), "Like A Rose," and "Vodville" are advanced tunes, the kind where most jazzbos fear to tread.

"Branford has been encouraging me almost to the point where I think he's lying," laughs Tain regarding his ongoing employer's support. "We played 'Vodville' in his group, and Branford is one of the only people who can do justice to it." "Vodville" begins with a rib-tickling solo, as does the Billy Higgins tribute "Laughin' & Talkin' With Higgins."

"Within the context of the solo is stuff that Higgins would do," Tain says. "There's an African thing in the beginning, and in the second part the hi-hat is in 2/4, which overlaps the bass drum, which is in 3/4. There was a certain style of solo Higgins played in the late '80s where he would have different textures happening. His thing was so broad. I just wanted to give Billy some love."

Ken Micallef

Alex Solca

Atom Willard
Moth's Mighty One

Go Atom, go! Moth's Atom Willard doesn't play the drums as much as he *punishes* them. "That was something that happened to me right around 1993, when I saw The Melvins," the drummer admits with a smile. "I instantly got enamored with the whole idea of huge drums and beating the crap out of them."

Justin Stevens

So Atom super-sized his kit. "It was silly, huge stuff," he adds, "but anybody who plays that music knows that you have to hit it to make any kind of sound." Over the years he's downsized, and nowadays plays a 24" kick and 13" and 16" toms. "That's the way to go," he reports. "A 13" tom is big enough that it's loud, but it's small enough that it speaks."

After Willard left the seminal punk rock band Rocket From The Crypt, he spent time playing with Weezer when Pat Wilson wasn't available. Atom also worked as a tech. "I was playing very little, and it really affected my demeanor," he explains. "I was making more money than I've ever made in my life, but I wasn't happy because I wasn't playing."

Willard caught the Moth gig while he was teching in the studio with Weezer. Atom joked with Moth's former A&R rep, Todd Sullivan, about the band needing a drummer. "I had no idea they actually did," Willard says with a laugh. "I was just trying to be a jerk, and one thing led to another."

Atom is picking up where Josh Freese, who recorded the album, left off. Laughing, the drummer explains that it wasn't so much of a challenge. "I've learned Josh's parts so many times; he does so many records, I feel like I know what he's going to play."

Willard brings the songs to life on stage, especially "Sleepy," where he likes to experiment. "There are three parts to the song, and Josh had a similar treatment when each came around," he says. "I've taken this idea and developed it, stacking it on top of itself so that by the last time around, nobody knows what's going on. That's a fun song to play."

And Atom still has the chance to knock 'em out. "There are times when I need to be quiet and I need to consciously say, 'Okay, relax.' All loud all the time is not always right," he suggests. "I'm not saying don't play loud. When it's time do it, do it up, do it right."

David John Farinella

Gina Schock

Still Goin' With The Go-Go's

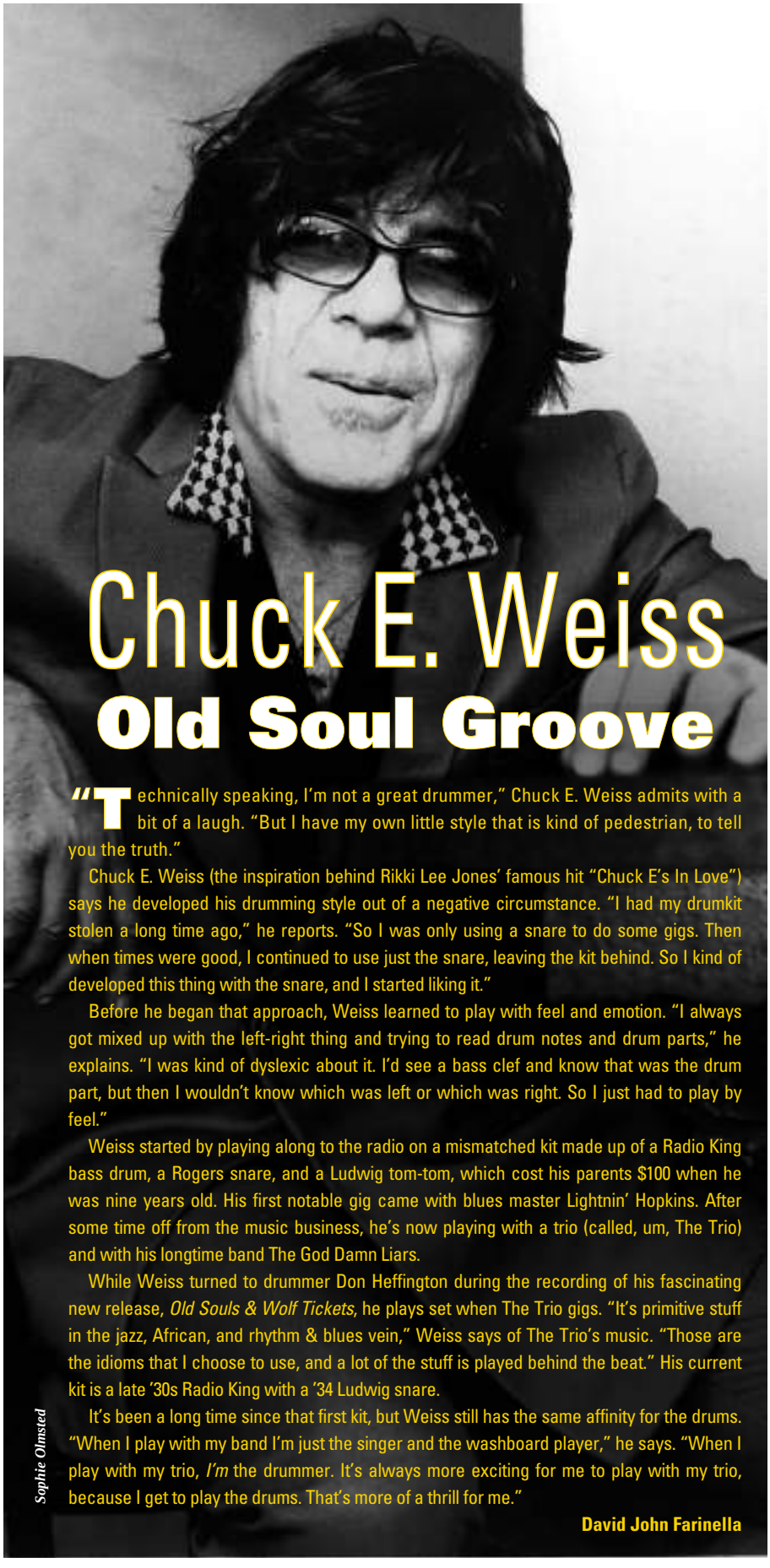
The most popular all-female band to emerge from the late '70s LA punk rock scene—or any other scene—The Go-Go's achieved significant commercial success and blazed huge trails for women in rock. Drummer Gina Schock, for one, figures she's influenced a number of women who've picked up the drumsticks in the past two decades. "There are *a lot* more women drummers now than there used to be, and I'd like to think that I'm part of the reason," she says proudly. "When you have kids coming up to you saying, 'You're the reason I started playing drums,' it's the best feeling in the world. When something *you* feel so passionately about becomes their passion…well…it doesn't get any better than that."

The Go-Go's called it quits in 1985, but reunited as a touring band in 1994. In 2001 they recorded their first album of new material since 1984's *Talk Show*, *God Bless The Go-Go's*. Today the band is in the midst of a national tour.

Inspired by a mind-blowing first concert experience at age eleven, when her older brother took her to see Led Zeppelin opening for The Who, at thirteen Gina bought her first kit and taught herself to play. Her primary strength as a drummer, she says, is her timing. "Everybody's been blessed with something," she says, "and my gift is my timing. Let's face it, it's all about keeping time and having a groove. In The Go-Go's, my philosophy is that I contribute whatever the song requires. I never think, 'What can I put in here to show off the latest trick that I just picked up?' What I think is, 'What's required from me as a drummer to make this a better song?'"

Gina says the most surprising aspect of her career is simply the fact that she still makes a living doing what she loves most: playing the drums. "How lucky am I? Here it is, over twenty years later, and I'm still doing what I love to do with the same group of people. I just feel so blessed." One thing's for sure: Gina's still got the beat.

Gail Worley



Sophie Olmsted

Chuck E. Weiss

Old Soul Groove

"Technically speaking, I'm not a great drummer," Chuck E. Weiss admits with a bit of a laugh. "But I have my own little style that is kind of pedestrian, to tell you the truth."

Chuck E. Weiss (the inspiration behind Rikki Lee Jones' famous hit "Chuck E's In Love") says he developed his drumming style out of a negative circumstance. "I had my drumkit stolen a long time ago," he reports. "So I was only using a snare to do some gigs. Then when times were good, I continued to use just the snare, leaving the kit behind. So I kind of developed this thing with the snare, and I started liking it."

Before he began that approach, Weiss learned to play with feel and emotion. "I always got mixed up with the left-right thing and trying to read drum notes and drum parts," he explains. "I was kind of dyslexic about it. I'd see a bass clef and know that was the drum part, but then I wouldn't know which was left or which was right. So I just had to play by feel."

Weiss started by playing along to the radio on a mismatched kit made up of a Radio King bass drum, a Rogers snare, and a Ludwig tom-tom, which cost his parents $100 when he was nine years old. His first notable gig came with blues master Lightnin' Hopkins. After some time off from the music business, he's now playing with a trio (called, um, The Trio) and with his longtime band The God Damn Liars.

While Weiss turned to drummer Don Heffington during the recording of his fascinating new release, *Old Souls & Wolf Tickets*, he plays set when The Trio gigs. "It's primitive stuff in the jazz, African, and rhythm & blues vein," Weiss says of The Trio's music. "Those are the idioms that I choose to use, and a lot of the stuff is played behind the beat." His current kit is a late '30s Radio King with a '34 Ludwig snare.

It's been a long time since that first kit, but Weiss still has the same affinity for the drums. "When I play with my band I'm just the singer and the washboard player," he says. "When I play with my trio, *I'm* the drummer. It's always more exciting for me to play with my trio, because I get to play the drums. That's more of a thrill for me."

David John Farinella

Skeebo Knight

Overcoming The Pain

Skeebo Knight loves drumming. Yet the pain he must endure simply to sit behind his kit and lay down a groove is staggering. Knight suffers from Scleroderma, which he describes as a connective tissue disorder that causes a variety of painful symptoms including muscle rigidity, skeletal stiffness, fatigue, muscle and joint inflammation, and severe muscle spasms.

Despite the pain and exhaustion, Knight remains devoted to drumming. He's released two albums since the onset of his illness, and is now finishing a third. Knight's first album, *It's About Time,* features several drumset compositions with percussion added to the mix. *Tales From Wimbish Woods*, his follow-up release, is a jazz album featuring several guest musicians, including Rolling Stones keyboardist Chuck Leavell.

Knight's most recent venture, *Jekyll Island Nights,* is also a jazz-oriented collection featuring several collaborating musicians. "With my health problems, I'm unable to go out and play with other people," Knight says. "So these projects give me the chance to collaborate. Most of the musicians on the album are also my good friends."

Knight uses a strategic combination of adaptive technology and a very specific routine to enable him to continue playing. On the mornings that he plans to drum, he does extensive stretching, warm-up exercises, and physical therapy, and then takes a short nap. After waking up, he warms up a second time and then finally plays. Skeebo plays as much as he can, and then is often forced by extreme fatigue to spend the rest of the day resting and recovering.

"When I'm so tired and hurting so much, the thought of quitting crosses my mind," Knight admits. "But I've learned not to make decisions then. And drumming has done so much for me. I've learned how to relax and have less tension in my body. This is a big part of drumming, even if you don't have a physical ailment."

Knight has also adjusted his setup. He uses a DrumFrame and locates both the ride cymbal and hi-hats on his left side so that he doesn't have to cross over. He also uses Ahead sticks and gloves to lessen the pain of impact.

Knight's CDs are available from cdbaby.com/skeebo.

Harriet L. Schwartz

NEWS

Johnny Fay is on The Tragically Hip's first Zoe/Rounder release, *In Violet Light*.

Ricky Lawson is currently drummer and musical director for the Winans Family. He's also co-producing one of their live concerts for a CD and video called *Up Close And Personal*. In August, he is doing a Yellowjackets reunion CD and video at the Anson Ford Theater in LA. Ricky then goes to Japan with Babyface in the fall, and will begin work on a new solo CD in the new year.

Jeff Campitelli is on Joe Satriani's *Strange Beautiful Music*.

Keith Carlock is on drums and **Zakir Hussain** on tablas and kanjira on Leni Stern's new album, *Finally The Rain Has Come*.

Jack Mitchell is on Haven's debut Virgin album, *Between The Senses*.

Frankie Banali is on the new W.A.S.P. album, *Dying For The World*.

Brady Blade is on tour with The Indigo Girls.

Ian A. Falgout recently recorded with Mark Allen, Windsor, and Kevin Jones. He recently returned from tours with rockabilly band The Cadillac Angels and with The Rick Reeves Band.

Glen Sobel is on tour with Beautiful Creatures.

Will Kennedy is working with Lee Ritenour.

In addition to his usual gig on *The Tonight Show*, **Marvin "Smitty" Smith** is on a new CD with The Kevin Eubanks Group.

Mel Gaynor is on tour with Simple Minds.

Moyes Lucas has been working with Larry Carlton, as well as with Brenda Russell. He recently recorded Ray Fuller's new record.

Josh Freese is on records by 12 Stones, Seether, Wicked Queen, Marc Copely, Cinder, Amy Allen, and Orco. He's currently making new records with A Perfect Circle and The Vandals. By the way, it's a little-known fact that it's Josh on Puddle Of Mudd's recent disc.

Poison (with **Rikki Rockett** on drums) is on tour promoting their new CD, *HollyWeird*.

Sterling Campbell is on tour with David Bowie.

Mark O'Connell is on Taking Back Sunday's *Tell All Your Friends*.

Jason Bowld is on Pitchshifter's Sanctuary Records debut, *P.S.I.*

Shawn Pelton is on Shana Morrison's *7 Wishes* and Sheryl Crow's *C'mon, C'mon*. (**Steve Jordan** is also on the Crow disc.)

Chad Wright is juggling touring duties with Chaka Khan and Debelah Morgan.

JD Blair is playing dates in Japan with Take 6.

Darryl White is on Tab Benoit's new CD, *Wetlands*.

Simon Wright is on DIO's new CD, *Killing The Dragon*.

Tommy Clufetos recently completed recording Ted Nugent's new record, *Craveman*.

Dean Butterworth has just finished a recording project with the former singer of Candlebox. His main project is a US tour with Morrissey. Dean is also slated to begin recording a new album with Morrissey shortly following the tour.

Victor DeLorenzo is back with The Violent Femmes, who are touring to support Rhino Records' remastered and expanded edition of the band's classic first album.

Lee Kelley is out on the road with new MCA-Nashville artist Shannon Lawson in support of his debut album, *Chase The Sun*.

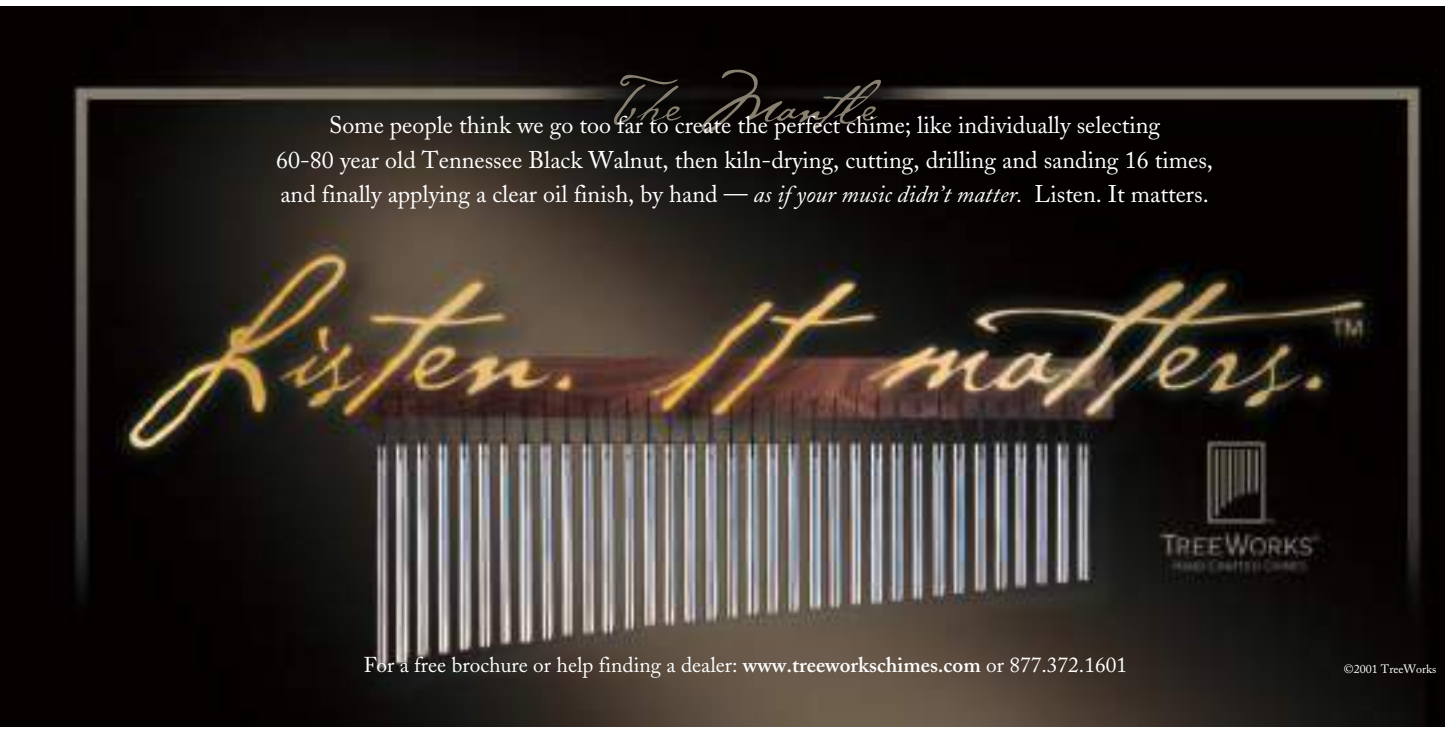
Rich Redmond has been touring with country sensations Pam Tillis, Andy Griggs, Mindy McCready, Tim Rushlow, and Jo-El Sonnier. He also has five hundred of his drum loops available for purchase from sonomic.com. Check out Rich at his Web site, www.richredmond.com.

Terry Silverlight is touring Japan this summer with The Manhattan Jazz Orchestra and can be heard on their recent release. He can also be heard on Steve Sacks' new CD, all the score music for A&E's detective series *Nero Wolf*, and on the soundtrack for the upcoming film *Frida*.

Joe Franco recently played on Ozzy Osbourne's daughter Kelly's single for the soundtrack to MTV's *The Osbourne Family*. He also played on two tracks for Jessica Simpson's younger sister, Ashley.

Keith Hall is touring the States with singer/songwriter Curtis Stigers.

Congratulations to **Jimmy DeGrasso** and his wife, Carolyne, on the birth of their daughter Lily Irene.



DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Buddy Rich was born on September 30, 1917.

Original Average White Band drummer **Robbie McIntosh** died on September 23, 1974.

Keith Moon died on September 7, 1978.

John Bonham died on September 25, 1980.

Shelly Manne passed away on September 26, 1984.

Philly Joe Jones died in September of 1985.

On September 30, 1968 (**Buddy Rich**'s fifty-first birthday), Buddy and his band perform with Frank Sinatra at Ronnie Scott's jazz club in London.

On September 4, 1970, The Rolling Stones (with **Charlie Watts** on drums) release their classic live record, *Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out*.

On September 13, 1993, NBC's *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* premieres with **Max Weinberg** as the show's bandleader.

On September 5, 1998, KoRn (with **David Silveria** on drums) debut at number-one on *Billboard's* album charts with their third disc, *Follow The Leader*.

Happy Birthday!

Elvin Jones (September 9, 1927)
Horacee Arnold (September 25, 1935)
Ron Bushy (September 23, 1945)
Greg Errico (September 1, 1946)
Don Brewer (September 3, 1948)
Martin Chambers (September 4, 1951)
Neil Peart (September 12, 1952)
Zak Starkey (September 13, 1965)
Ginger Fish (September 28, 1965)
Robin Goodridge (September 10, 1966)
Steven Perkins (September 13, 1967)
Tyler Stewart (September 21, 1967)
Brad Wilk (September 5, 1968)
John Blackwell (September 9, 1973)

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Sabian's HHXplosion Crash is the latest model in their award-winning HHX cymbal series. Available in 16" and 18" sizes, the cymbals feature jumbo-sized hammer marks on their natural finish surface, along with a large, hammered, raw bell. According to Sabian, the HHXplosion crashes "combine tonal richness with enhanced brightness and sustain in a response that is fast, explosive, and full of penetrating warmth. Clear, bright highs and a dirty 'edge' dominate the sound." All HHX cymbals are covered by a special two-year warranty.

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

On The Road Again

Tama Roadpro Hardware

Tama's Roadpro series is a new line of "ultra-durable" hardware designed by and for pro players. Roadpro will be Tama's standard hardware on its top-of-line kits.

The new hardware features the same-sized tripod bases as Tama's heavy-duty Titan hardware. But the middle and upper tubes are thinner, for better balance and to better fit many of Tama's attachments, such as the MTH900 Modular Tom Holder.

The snare stand features new "Escape Claws"—rubber tips that eliminate snare-hoop choking by the snare-basket claws. The gears on the snare basket and the cymbal stands have nearly twice as many teeth, for finer adjustments. The cymbal holders feature rods that are two millimeters thicker than on previous models, for increased durability. The die-cast pipe joints utilize a bolt-and-nut design instead of a direct bolt insert, which provides more security and makes replacement easier.

☎ (215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.

Sometimes It's What You Don't Hear That Matters

Direct Sound Extreme Isolation Headphones

Extreme Isolation Headphones were developed by studio drummer John Gresko as a method of improving the mix that he heard in his headphones. His object was to eliminate the need to go into the control booth after every take to hear what the engineer heard. This would save time and money.

The headphones combine specially designed earmuffs that attenuate surrounding sound by 29 decibels with a custom-fitted high-quality speaker assembly. The extreme external-sound isolation reduces the volume required within the phones. This, in turn, protects the user's eardrums from damage. The earmuff itself is designed to be comfortable enough to be worn for hours without fatigue. A lightweight, extra-long cord (with twin leads from the earmuffs) permits ease of movement, and both $\frac{1}{8}$" and $\frac{1}{4}$" gold connectors are provided. The right ear felt is bright red to easily identify the right speaker, and the headphones are foldable for easy pack-up. They list for $169.

The Magnificent Seven

Sonor Artist Series Snare Drums

Seven new snare drums from Sonor have been designed in conjunction with some of the company's top artists—hence the Artist Series designation. The 5x12 12-ply birch model features an Art Design finish. The 5x13 27-ply birch shell is designed to create pinpoint clarity required in drum 'n' bass playing, and features an Earth Tribe finish. For vintage fans there's a 5x14 all-maple drum with vintage-style single-flange rims. A 6$\frac{1}{2}$x14 Maple Light drum comes in a cottonwood finish. In metal snares there's a 5x14 brass model, a 5x14 steel model finished in black chrome, and a 6x14 bronze model.

☎ (804) 515-1900, www.hohnerusa.com or www.sonor.de.

5x14 Steel

5x14 Brass

5x14 Maple with vintage rims

Celebrating The Old And The New

Paiste 2002 Special Edition Cymbals And Noiseworks Series

No matter how nifty *new* products are, there are always those who hanker for "the old stuff." For those folks Paiste now offers selected "Special Edition" 2002 models that are faithful reproductions of their vintage ancestors. No changes to current manufacturing methods were required, since the handcrafting of 2002 cymbals hasn't changed in the past thirty years. However, the Special Edition models will feature handstamped logos as used in the early 1970s.

The Special Edition models have been created to commemorate the 2002 series' thirtieth anniversary, and to celebrate the series in the year synonymous with its name. The Special Edition models will only be manufactured during the year 2002, and will be accompanied by a certificate of authenticity that gives the history of the series.

Lest anyone think Paiste is only looking back, they recently added the "Noise Works" collection to their eclectic Exotic/Percussion series. The new collection consists of cymbal-stack combinations and hi-hats with specialized applications. Most were designed originally for modern electronic musical applications such as dance, house, and drum 'n' bass. Their design makes them well suited to emulate sampled and electronically processed cymbal sounds in a natural drumset environment. In addition, Paiste feels that they offer "interesting alternative crash, ride, hi-hat, and X-hat functions in most modern musical settings."

The specific new models are the 11"/18" Dark Buzz China (a classic splash/China stack), the 12"/14"/14" Triple Raw Smash (a combination of three cymbals with variable crash functions), the 12"/12" Double Clang Crash (a double-stack crash combo), the 12" Fizzle Hat (a small hi-hat with a soft, sizzling quality), the 12" Paper Splash Hat (a small, very responsive hi-hat with a splashy character), and the 12" Fast X-Hat (a stacked combo with hi-hat and crash functions). The existing 12"/16", 14"/18", and 16"/20" Trash Sets (stacked combos offering crash, hi-hat, and ride functions) have been integrated into the new "Noise Works" collection.

(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.

Taking An Ecological Approach

New Drum Solo Snare Drums

Drum Solo has added granadillo and cancharana to its list of FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) certified woods for use in snare drums. Granadillo comes from the Yucatan Peninsula region of Mexico, and is used in instrument making due to its rich sound qualities. It's considered an excellent substitute for the endangered rosewood and cocobolo.

Cancharana is native to Paraguay. It's reddish-brown in color and produces a warm sound similar to that of a quality mahogany. Both woods make a professional-level snare drum unique in sound and appearance, and demonstrate an awareness of environmental concerns by the drum purchaser. Both drums are priced at $1,500. (The cancharana drum shown here has vintage-style hoops and clips available at extra cost.)

(415) 898-2647, www.drumsolo.cc.

Percussion Plethora

New Instruments From Latin Percussion

Latin Percussion Inc. now offers a fiberglass requinto—a conga with a reduced head size of 9¾" and a specially contoured belly. The requinto's size provides a distinctive high voice in the conga family, and the fiberglass construction adds to the brightness of its sound.

The new LP Wood Rim Tambora is said to retain the tone and shell of traditional tamboras. But with the help of modern technology it features a select, kiln-dried, wood-covered rim, set over a steel hoop for enhanced durability.

LP's World Beat Pleneras drew inspiration from the plena, a popular music form of Puerto Rico. Available in three sizes, the drums feature sturdy lightweight wood construction, tunable calf heads, and steel rims.

New World Beat Tunable Frame Drums come as a set of three in 8", 10", and 12" sizes. Each drum has a lightweight but strong wooden frame with a generous thumbhole. Weather-resistant plastic heads are standard and fully tunable.

☎ **(973) 478-6903,** **www.lpmusic.com.**

Fiberglass Requintos

Tambora

Pleneras

Tunable Frame Drums

Old Tools, New Designs

Pernan Percussion's **JingleMutes** are miniature tambourines that can be attached to drumsticks and used or muted during play. Unlike a stand-based or hi-hat-mounted tambourine, the JingleMute allows you to have the full, natural wash and attack of a tambourine without monopolizing a hand that can otherwise be playing a hi-hat, ride, or tom simultaneously. A dampening system allows you to play the tambourine as it was intended, while playing every part of the kit as you would normally. According to the manufacturer, "The JingleMute is not only serious fun, but a serious instrument for the live player."

☎ **(773) 866-2590,** **www.pernan.com.**

Drumm Chukks drumsticks feature a non-linear design that incorporates a spring between the tapered portion and the shank. This allows the tip to strike the drum a split second before it "bends" away, allowing the end of the shank area to strike. This creates a unique "flam effect." According to the manufacturer, Drumm Chukks produce a more consistent drum tone, extend drumhead life, and also produce a "fatter" drum sound. They're available exclusively at **www.theblastingzone.com.**

RattleSticks are wood sticks fitted with an anodized aluminum tube in their center. Inside the tube are shaker pellets that send out a high-pitched shaker sound when played. This sound is combined with that of the stick hitting the playing surface, and is automatically in perfect time with that sound. RattleSticks are available in 2B wood tip hickory versions only, at **www.RattleSticks.com.**

Unique Drummer, Unique Sounds

Meinl Thomas Lang Signature Cymbals

Anyone who saw Thomas Lang at *MD's* Festival Weekend knows what a distinctive player he is. That same distinctive quality is found in his signature cymbal line from Meinl's Generation X series. Called simply Tom's Beckens (German for "Tom's Cymbals"), the cymbals are made from what Meinl calls FX9 alloy, for a thin, splashy response and quick decay—ideal for techno, drum 'n' bass, or any other style where light, fast cymbals are desired.

The line includes a 14" Filter China (with a unique hole pattern drilled into the body of the cymbal), a 16" Synthetik crash, a 17" Kompressor crash, an 18" Signal crash/Klub ride, and an 18" Kinetik crash. Two pre-pack configurations are available.

(305) 418-4520, gomeinl@aol.com.

Under The Baton

Grover Flagship Orchestral Snare Drum

Grover Pro Percussion's new Flagship Orchestral Snare Drum features a solid, steam-bent New England sugar maple shell with an $^{11}/_{32}$" wall. This allows the shell to be unimpeded by support rings for a fuller, more natural shell resonance. Black-chrome die-cast rims and black chrome tube lugs provide a distinctive look. Natural maple, mahogany, walnut, and ebony lacquer finishes are available.

This drum is the first of its kind to feature combination German silver wires and phosphor bronze "7x1" cable snares. This combination is said to create a blend of clear highs and full-spectrum mid transients for a full and round yet dry and articulate sound. The drum comes equipped with an Earthtone natural-skin batter head for an orchestral sound and feel.

(781) 935-6200, www.groverpro.com.

It's All On Your Head

Head First can take your art, photos, logos, or computer files and reproduce them for your bass drum head. Heads are produced in vibrant color and are available between 18" and 26" in diameter. Prices start at $100. Source images can be photos or original art. Head First can also design custom images.

(781) 963-4323, www.headfirst-online.com.

Advance Drum Decals uses a patented process to create a printed design covered by a protective film, which is then adhered onto a new Evans one-ply bass-drum head. The company offers a number of "stock" designs, and can also do original designs submitted by the user. With the decal applied, the head has the acoustic characteristic of a two-ply model. Heads are available in 18" through 26" bass-drum sizes. Orders are currently being taken exclusively by email. Format information is available on the company's Web site.

Customers are provided with a proof prior to printing. **(619) 232-7756, www.drumdecals.com.**

Sing For Your Supper

Shure WH30 Headworn Performance Mic'

Shure's WH30 is designed to be an affordable headworn microphone for performers who require unhindered mobility along with the professional audio quality of a condenser capsule. It features a frequency response tailored to enhance the clarity of vocals, a flexible gooseneck that facilitates optimal microphone placement, an isolation shock mount that reduces vibration noise, and a snap-on windscreen. Its cardioid polar pattern is designed to provide maximum gain before feedback.

The WH30 is available in a hardwired version, as well as with several of Shure's wireless microphone systems. When purchased separately, the mic' carries a suggested retail price of $170 for wireless (system not included) and $278 for wired.

(847) 866-2200, www.shure.com.

You Hit This...It Sounds Like That...

Roland TMC-6 Trigger MIDI Converter

Roland's TMC-6 makes it easy for drummers to play MIDI modules and samplers from a Roland electronic drumset or from an acoustic drumset with triggers. According to Roland, "This affordable device uses the lightning-fast technology of Roland's V-Drums for reliable triggering and super-accurate dynamics."

The TMC-6 has six trigger inputs that work with any Roland drum pads, and it can mount on a conventional drum stand. It contains twelve user memory locations in which settings can be stored. It also provides a trigger chase on/off switch.

Acoustic drummers using drum triggers (and V-Drum owners) can employ the TMC-6 to incorporate new MIDI sounds, including samples and synth patches. They'll also be able to play drum sounds from MIDI instruments such as Roland's Fantom workstation or XV-5080 module.

For V-Drum owners, the TMC-6 adds additional trigger inputs to their kits, allowing them to add extra V-Cymbals or rack toms. The TMC-6 supports separate head and rimshot triggering when used with the PD-120 and PD-80R V-Pads, and three-way triggering of CY-15R and CY-12R/C V-Cymbals. It also works with an FD-7 Hi-Hat Control Pedal.

(323) 890-3700, www.RolandUS.com.

And What's More

KITANO Super Snare Drums are available with either 6-mm titanium or 8-mm aluminum shells. Each is said to deliver "an impressively punchy and open sound." Precision-cut brass bolts promise accurate tuning. Titanium double hoops produce "intense" rimshots. More affordable steel hoops are available upon request. Titanium snare-holding cables are said to provide "great vibration-conduction capability," thereby gaining "the utmost tonal quality" from the snares. Sizes available in both shell types include 4x14, 5½x14, and 6½x14. ☎ **011-03-3251-7491,** **www.musictrades.co.jp.**

UNIGRIP has added Bamboo Brushes to its line of bamboo sticks and FlipStix. Each brush features nineteen bamboo dowels attached to a hickory drumstick handle. The bamboo rods are said to hold up longer than other wood-dowel specialty sticks, and to provide an alternative sound with better reaction. List price is $25.95 per pair. ☎ **(800) 474-7068,** **www.unigrip2000.com.**

MRP CUSTOM DRUMS now offers stave-shell models that combine the warmth of maple and the focused projection of birch. They're available in maple/birch and all-birds-eye maple versions (12", 13", and 14" diameters) that range in price from $395 to $699. Also new are phosphor bronze metal drums, with .082"-thick shells, precision bearing edges, and laser-cut logos in place of traditional air vents. ☎ **(516) 568-2820,** **www.mrpdrums.com.**

THE FUNKY SIX by D. Scott Williams is a method book for intermediate to advanced drummers. It provides a comprehensive method to develop fluency in sextuplet-oriented grooves like the funk shuffle and 6/8 funk/rock. The sixty-six-page book is organized in a concise, practice-friendly format so drummers can easily revisit particular sections as their ability strengthens. The book is distributed by DrumWorks Productions. ☎ **(610) 657-4146,** **dsw@drumworksprod.com.**

Aerosmith's Joey Kramer has released ***JOEY KRAMER DRUM LOOPS***, a digital library featuring over eighty tracks of drum fills, crashes, rhythms, and beats. The loops are available in two different versions. The first is a two-CD set ($150) that comes pre-mixed and ready for use with any computer sampling program. The second version is a ten-CD set ($500) that allows users to personally set the mix on the individual sounds. Once they've purchased the discs, users will not have to pay any royalty fees for the use of the loops in their songs. Created and distributed by Audio Icons/EASTWEST. **www.audioicons.com,** **www.soundsonline.com.**

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU PLAY, IT'S WHAT YOU PLAY IT WITH.

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THE NUMBER ONE STICK IN THE WORLD.

Drum Workshop Collector's Series Birch Drumkit

They Got It Right The First Time

HITS

kit has the "control" of birch, but with unexpected resonance and tonal range

outstanding construction quality

beautiful appearance

by Kevin D. Osborne

While several major drum companies have offered birch drums for quite a while, DW has come to this choice of wood fairly late in the game. Up till now they've focused their energies on 100% maple drums. Now, with the introduction of the Collector's Series Birch drumset, DW enters the arena in a major way, bringing their reputation for quality, fit, and finish along with them.

Appearance: A Honey Of A Kit

The drums are created from the heartwood of the birch tree, which offers distinctive contrasts in its grain. Finishing the drum adds subtlety to the contrast while still allowing the coloration to show through. The result is a strikingly beautiful effect.

Our review kit featured a Lacquer Custom Series finish called Rich Red Burst. I'd describe it as a dark, warm, transparent amber, lightening to a glazed honey fade, and then warming back to the amber again. The color reminds me of carmelized sugar and honey...with a finish every bit as smooth.

Construction

Collector's Series toms feature a 45° bearing edge cut to the inside, with a slight counter-cut on the outside. A 45° edge transmits the energy to the shell more readily than a shallower cut does, so it will produce more

sound from the shell and add greater depth to that sound. The snare and bass drum have 60° bearing edges to give them greater punch.

Until recently, DW Collector's Series drums were made with reinforcement hoops to add strength at the tuning points and to sharpen the sound. Compared to maple, however, birch has a faster vibration with a shorter sustain. This creates a sound with more punch and focus—which doesn't need the additional sharpening that reinforcement hoops provide. So DW offers birch shells without hoops as standard. (They are available as options if desired.)

Collector's Series drums are available in five size ranges, totaling thirty-one toms, nineteen bass drums, and twenty-nine snares. Now that's choice! Not only does this provide the opportunity to obtain a drumset that fits your particular needs and tastes, it also ensures that you're not stuck with the limited tuning ranges offered by standard-dimensioned drums.

Hardware

Our review kit included DW's heavy-duty 9000 series hardware. I liked the large knurled knob on the snare stand and the tilt lever that allowed instant 360° adjustment. The combination tom/cymbal stands held the drums and cymbals firmly, and the Delta II hi-hat provided lots of positioning options with its swiveling two-legged base.

What really impressed me, though, was the engineering that went into this hardware. Consider these well-devised features: cymbal wing nuts that never spin off and get lost, oversized easily adjustable memory locks, cymbal seats that adjust the play of the cymbal under the wing nut, easy-grip cymbal tilt levers, a side-mounted wing nut for the bass drum pedal clamp, and padded bass drum claws to protect those lovely rims. Finally, the toms have rubberized wing nuts that are easy on the hands, and the hi-hat clutch just doesn't let go. These are all functional items that make a drummer's life *so* much easier.

What's the Difference?

"Birch...maple...what's the difference?" you ask. Well, I wanted to know too. So DW sent me a 9x12 tom of each, with the same date and lot number. I tuned the two drums as close in pitch as possible while retaining the best tonality, and then applied the sticks.

Although the maple had a longer decay rate and resonated more, the birch had plenty of its own resonance. It also had its share of overtones and musicality. Maple has a sound that opens up like an expanding sphere, growing fuller and rounder until reaching its decay point. The birch sound is more like an inverted cone, starting out with punch and volume and focusing down to its point of decay. The birch delivers most of its sound up front, giving plenty of quick response when played. This is the "controlled" characteristic that has made birch drums so popular for recording. But it works equally well for live applications where a focused sound is desired.

Tune, Tune, And Re-Tune

The drums on our review kit featured DW's TimbreMatched shells. This, and the fact that each drum diameter was 2" different from the other, means that it would be difficult *not* to come up with a great sound when tuning them.

Let me illustrate. I tuned the drums three separate times in three different manners to determine which produced the best sound. First, I tuned them in relation to each other. This is how I usually tune drums, and the result was pleasing.

A week later I tuned the toms again—this time independent of one another. I tuned each drum's bottom head to a slightly higher pitch than the top head. The top heads responded with pronounced attack while the bottom heads resonated with a low, full response—a good mix of sound and projection. Overall, the sound of the toms was punchy, with lots of great tone.

At that point I thought I had the drums tuned to their best sound. But then I did some additional reading and discovered that DW recommends tuning both heads to the same pitch. That tuning is a little trickier to achieve than having one head higher than the other, but I found out that there's a world of difference in the results.

Sounding The Depths

Once I had the heads tuned the same, the drums became even *more* resonant, with a warmer tone and more sustain. They also had less of the "wow" you get when the tighter bottom head adds its higher pitch and reflects that wave of sound back at the top head.

Birch drums are often touted for their "focused frequency response" in live and studio situations. But DW's design has produced a drum that is also pleasingly resonant. After each drum was struck, the sound lingered long enough to soften the stroke and add melody to the beat. The higher toms delivered great tone and a solid punch, while the lower toms had noticeable attack and growl down at the bottom. The real joy was the 8" tom. This drum can be tricky to tune, but it rewards you with a versatile voice that can sing like a timbale yet still fit in alongside the other toms.

The bass drum delivered a low, well-defined punch and presence. It didn't overwhelm the rest of the kit, but it certainly couldn't be missed. Its effect was felt as much as heard—a pounding "pumph," deep and full but not over-sustained.

The 10-ply birch snare was a marvel. It had plenty of ring, especially for a wood snare. It wasn't in the least bit boxy, but it still had that distinct characteristic of wood: warm but hard, pushing and guiding the sound around the lacquered inside of the drum before delivering it to the ear. This little beauty hissed on a soft, low buzz roll but still cracked on 2 and 4.

Conclusion

DW's Birch drumset blends the focus and punch of birch with a warm resonance that holds its own sonically. The choice of heartwood produces an appearance that rivals its acoustics. It's an impressive and pleasing combination that DW can be proud of building and any drummer would be proud to own and play.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 7x8, 8x10, 9x12, 11x14, and 13x16 toms (all suspended), 18x22 bass drum, and 5x14 snare drum. Toms and bass drum feature 6-ply birch shells with no reinforcing hoops. Snare features 10-ply shell. Toms fitted with DW Coated/Clear heads, bass drum fitted with Remo PowerStroke 3 batter, snare fitted with white-coated Ambassador. Kit equipped with 9000 series heavy-duty hardware, including double-tom and tom/cymbal stands, straight cymbal stand, snare stand, Delta II hi-hat, Delta II Accelerator pedal, and throne.

List price: **$8,392**

Y (805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

Meinl Professional Series Wood Congas

Beefy Drums...Heavy Sounds

HITS

outstanding construction quality

warm, woody, natural tones

comfortable to play on

MISSES

weight reduces portability

by Norman Arnold

Meinl Percussion has a reputation for high-quality workmanship. So it should come as no surprise that their new Professional Series congas are of the highest standard. Everything is top-of-the-line here. From the choice of wood to the lugs, and from the skins to the design of the rims, these are extremely well-made drums that are a pleasure to play. Let's get right to them.

The Drums

As soon as the drums were unpacked and set up, their quality, workmanship, and, well, *heft* became obvious. The drums are very heavy, and solid as a rock. Their shells are formed using two-ply staves of rubber wood (that's *Hevea brasiliensis* for those of you *really* into Latin) and the care that goes into the manufacturing process is immediately obvious.

Meinl's Conga Saver tuning lugs are mounted to the drums with an additional rubber mount between the lug plate and the drum to protect the beauty of the shell. The rounded SSR rims are made of chrome-plated steel. They're extremely smooth and very comfortable to play. They've even been sanded and buffed on the underside to eliminate any rough edges for when you move the drums or carry them around. That's a nice touch that underscores Meinl's attention to detail with this series. The drums are fitted with True Skin buffalo heads—which complete the whole package as you might expect: right on the money.

It's hard not to get a little wrapped up in how well these drums are made. But what about how they sound? Well, after simply enjoying their aesthetic beauty for a while, I finally found it in me to actually *hit* the drums.

Sound

Hallelujah. The sound was warm, deep, emotive, loud, and alive—and that was with *me* playing them. I heard great overall tone, fantastic bottom end, and a solid range from all the drums. The quinto is warm, and when cranked up high it still retains a hearty wooden sound. The slap is smart, bright, and pronounced. This is true skin-on-skin sound at its best.

The conga and tumba were very well matched, and each produced a focused and centered sound—not too boomy, not too dull, not too ringy. Again, a very "woody" and warm quality.

Along with recording all the drums at my studio, I took the quinto and conga to a film scoring session. Since the session was for a movie, not a record, the sound and style requested was more "world music" than specifically Afro-Cuban or pop. The drums weren't tuned as high as they probably would be for a pop record. I was very pleased with the way they sounded—really fat. These drums would be an obvious choice for any studio player or touring professional.

Functionality

The Professional Series congas were accompanied by a set of Meinl's TMC conga stands, which are light and easy to carry. It did take me a second to figure them out, because I had never seen a stand design like this before. But once I did, I saw the light. You adjust each stand and memory-lock the legs—which, in turn, creates the angle to cradle the drum. Once the drum is in the stand, it's not going anywhere. The whole conga/stand assembly is sturdy and rock-solid.

So what about portability? As I said, the drums are very solid, and you can feel it. But if you gig a lot in different locations, you might want to test for yourself how heavy they are. Go and lift them a couple of times before you decide to buy. I've slogged through enough hotel kitchens to know what a pain it can be lugging your stuff around while you're looking for the ballroom in the Hyatt.

On the flip side, if you're on a tour and you have a roadie, or if you hire a cartage guy to move your stuff—hey, it's not your problem! Just something to think about.

Conclusion

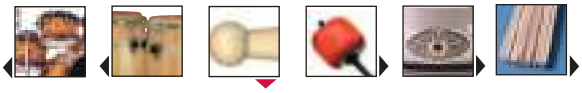
Simply put, Meinl's Professional Series congas sound great and are a joy to play. They might be a little inconvenient to schlepp around frequently, but I think their quality and performance would offset that for most players. They've sure been a pleasure to have around the house for a while. Like good old friends, I'm sorry to see them go.

THE NUMBERS

11" quinto **$570**
11¾" conga **$590**
12½" tumba **$610**
TMC Stand **$139**

Review drums featured a natural wood finish; cherry red finish is also available.

☎ (305) 418-4520, gomeinl@aol.com.



Vater Sugar Maple And Player's Design Sticks

How Sweet It Is!

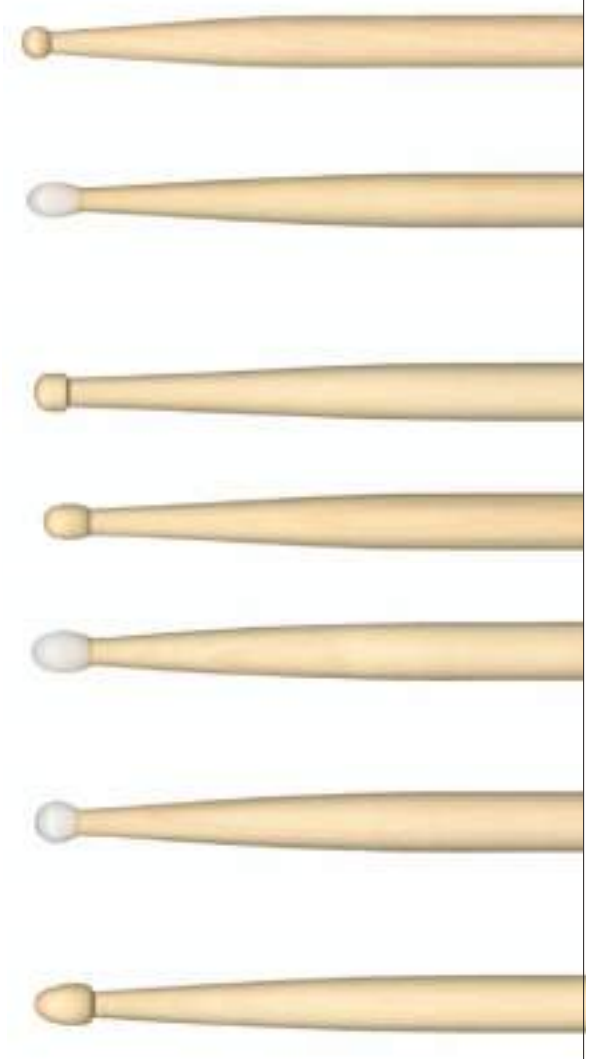
HITS

Sugar Maple sticks offer durability with light feel

Player's Design models aptly suit their namesakes' styles

all sticks straight and pitch-matched

by Chap Ostrander



Vater's new Sugar Maple line offers versions of several of their most popular hickory designs. They've also released new artist models in their Player's Design series. Let's take a look at all this variety.

Sugar Maple Series

Lightweight yet durable, Vater's Sugar Maple models are perfect for drummers playing in smaller venues where low volume is key—or who just like the comfortable grip of a big stick without a big stick's weight.

Sugar maple is also very dense, so the sticks elicited piercing highs from cymbal bells. (Nylon-tip versions had even more crystalline highs.) Rimclicks were very sharp as well. Now let's check out the individual models.

Sweet Ride: The very thin Sweet Rides feel light and delicate. Their small wood tips create a soft voice, but with no loss of clarity on cymbals. The tone on a ride cymbal was darker than that of the other models, perhaps due to the short taper. That taper doesn't affect the overall balance, but does lend some stiffness to the feel.

7A: These sticks had greater flexibility, a lighter touch on the ride, and a brighter sound than that of the Sweet Rides. The nylon tip resembled that of a 5A, while the wood tip was a ball type. In terms of balance, the nylon-tip model had a slightly heavier feel toward the front end, which gave greater definition and response on the ride cymbal. The wood-tip sticks felt more evenly balanced and were lighter on the ride. I liked them both.

8A: The 8A's moderate diameter and very long taper gave it a light, easy-moving feel. The barrel tip provided punch, but the overall size of the stick kept the power under control. The sound on cymbals was light and articulate. On drums the stick was all about control and energy.

Recording: These sticks were like a slightly heavier version of the 8A. The balance was even, though the shorter taper gave the sticks a bit more impact power. The voice of the stick on the ride was clear but somewhat darker than that of the 8A. As soon as I picked these sticks up, I felt like playing jazz.

5A: This is a good all-around stick in balance and sound. The medium taper gives flexibility to the playing feel. The teardrop tip makes lots of contact with cymbals and drums for a broad, full sound (though the nylon tip definitely sounds brighter and higher than the wood tip does). This is a workhorse stick that just about anyone could use with success.

Fusion: The Fusion model has bit more heft but a longer taper than the 5A, resulting in a very pleasing balance. It had a bright, full voice on cymbals, with extremely good definition on the ride. These sticks were yet another example of the nylon-tip version being slightly heavier in the front than the wood-tip version. Either way, this would be a useful stick for imparting greater power into your playing.

5B: Take the 5A, increase its diameter and shorten its taper slightly, and you have the 5B. The increased diameter at the shoulder moves the weight up to the tip, enhancing both the impact and the durability. There was very little difference in sound between the nylon and wood tip models. In fact, this model was very close in sound to the 5A—there's just more of it.

Player's Design Models

Artist models are always interesting, because you get to use the same stick that your favorite player has designed. I was impressed by the differences in the feel and response within this group, which is right in line with the variety of playing styles and gigs represented by the sticks' namesakes.

Michael White's Pocket Monster: This fairly thin stick has a rounded barrel tip and a short taper—a combination that makes it a true monster for laying down a deep pocket. The sound from cymbals and drums is direct and full. I got especially good articulation and definition from the ride.

Stewart Copeland Standard: This was a real feel-good pair of sticks, probably the most evenly balanced of the lot. The sound was bright on cymbals and drums due to the rounded oval tip. The taper is fairly long, making the response even and predictable.

John Blackwell Matrix: This is a comfortable-feeling stick, even at 16⅛" long. Its rather small, barrel-shaped tip provided clarity and articulation but a fairly soft sound on the ride cymbal. The weight and length pulls more sound from the kit.

Steve White's Hitmaker: I was surprised at a hickory stick measuring 16¼" long having such great balance and feel. With the same diameter as the Matrix, the Hitmaker had a shorter taper and an acorn tip, making it louder and more direct.

Josh Freese's H-220: The H-220 is a pretty good-sized stick. Its short taper and thick shoulder produced increased depth from cymbals and drums. But I was impressed by the fact that the size and weight didn't hold me back at all. The feel was much like that of the smaller models, just with a bigger sound.

Joey Heredia's Lowrider: The Lowrider is the only artist model in maple. Its oval wood tip softens the sound on cymbals, producing dark tones. The voice of the stick was very expressive, with a lot of definition on all fronts. Rimclicks were ferocious.

Conclusion

The new sticks from Vater are an impressive group. Their finish was flawless, and they were all straight and matched in pitch. (Vater sticks are tone-matched by computer.) The Sugar Maple series offers a lighter, more delicate feel. The Player's Design models have been shaped to meet the needs of world-class drummers from different styles of music. Get your hands on some and try them out!

THE NUMBERS

Sugar Maple

Sweet Ride	(.530" diameter, wood tip only)
7A	(.540" diameter, wood or nylon tip)
8A	(.555" diameter, wood tip only)
Recording	(.560" diameter, wood tip only)
5A	(.570" diameter, wood or nylon tip)
Fusion	(.580" diameter, wood or nylon tip)
5B	(.605" diameter, wood or nylon tip)

(Note: All Sugar Maple sticks are 16" long.)

List prices: **wood tip $11.85 per pair, nylon tip $12.30 per pair**

Player's Design

Michael White's Pocket Monster	(16" long, .540" diameter)
Stewart Copeland Standard	(16" long, .555" diameter)
John Blackwell Matrix	(16⅛" long, .570" diameter)
Steve White's Hitmaker	(16 ¼" long, .570" diameter)
Josh Freese's H-220	(16" long, .580" diameter)
Joey Heredia's Lowrider	(16⅛" long, .580" diameter)

(Note: All Players Design sticks are wood-tip only. All models are hickory except for Joey Heredia Lowrider, which is maple.)

List prices: **$12.90 per pair**

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

Custom showcase

Scan-Beat Pedals

Putting A New Foot Forward

HITS

innovative new design idea allows more relaxed playing

well executed and constructed

excellent finish on all components

MISSES

design limits double-pedal applications

by Chap Ostrander

Necessity, it's been said, is the mother of invention. I guess you could call the Scan-Beat pedal the stepson of that process. Back in 1966, drummer/inventor Soren Bloch came up with the idea of applying to his overworked foot the approach that most drummers were using for their hands. Drummers use their wrists and fingers on the sticks. Why should a drummer have to use his or her whole leg to play the bass drum, when the ankle, foot, and toes could do the job just as handily?

Soren applied the theory of drumstick pivot and control to bass drum pedals by lining up the pivot point of the footboard with the ankle (as opposed to under the heel). *Voila*. The Scan-Beat pedal was born.

A Different Design

A mere glimpse at the Scan-Beat tells you that it's *quite* different from any other pedal design. The front section of the pedal has all the adjustments you'd expect from a professional pedal, plus some I haven't seen before. The hoop clamp moves from side to side, allowing for an offset hook-up. The clamping mechanism uses a single locking lever with an adjustment that allows for different hoop sizes. (You set it once by turning a thumbscrew.) The footboard height, spring tension, and beater-stroke length are all independently adjustable. Ball bearings at all pivot points help create an absolutely silent action. Spurs on the sides of the pedals are mounted on the same track that holds everything else, allowing them to be adjusted back and forth.

Every Scan-Beat pedal is custom-made near San Francisco, California. Most of the components are machined from solid and extruded aluminum, while the shafts and pedal supports are made from stainless steel. The uprights on the pedals come in Blue/Turquoise Fade and Red-Hot Flame anodized finishes. All the nuts and bolts are standard, so your local hardware store can provide replacements if you need them. All of the adjustments on the pedal are secured with Allen screws, and Scan-Beat supplies a tool kit that provides all the necessary wrenches on one unit. A custom-made carrying bag is included with each pedal.

Setting It Up

Now the fun starts. You loosen the screws holding the back posts, and slide them so that they line up with the pivot point of your ankle. A U-bracket underneath the footboard slides as well, to maintain the proper angle. Once you set this and tighten everything down, you're good to go. The upper attachment points are variable, so you can keep the footboard off the floor, no matter how the rest of the pedal is set.

Pedal Performance

The Scan-Beat definitely *looks* cool. But how does it feel? I was honestly surprised at how light the unit felt under my foot. Every motion that my foot made was translated directly into the speed and impact of the beater. No effort was wasted. The curious thing is that all the action happens from the ankle down. Especially when playing the double version of the pedal, it was eerie to play quick, complex patterns and see my knees staying absolutely still. However, I was able to get used to the feel of the pedal after a relatively short break-in period. And I felt like I was using fewer muscles while achieving the same results.

There is one drawback to the Scan-Beat design when it comes to the double-pedal version. If you picture placing the slave side of the double pedal next to a hi-hat, it's obvious that your left foot would not glide easily from one footboard to the other. You'd have to lift your foot up and over the supporting frame at the rear of the pedal. (Soren has modified his pedals since this review was conducted to lower the frame somewhat, but the situation still exists.)

Most of what you've seen here is good news, though—especially if you use your ankle more than your leg and doing so is becoming painful. Such ergonomics don't come cheap, and the custom-machined nature of the Scan-Beat also contributes to its hefty price tag. However, if the demands of your gig are grueling, you may find the Scan-Beat the answer to a prayer.

Something For The Other Foot

Did I mention that there is also a hi-hat version? Soren has adapted the footboard assembly as a conversion add-on to an existing hi-hat from a major manufacturer. The benefit of the Scan-Beat system to the hi-hat is that it creates a direct straight pull to the rod. I'm told that the resulting feel is as smooth as glass. Having felt the bass pedals, I have no doubt. At the moment, hi-hats are offered on a special-order basis only.

Conclusion

The Scan-Beat system is more than an innovation. I honestly think it should be considered as a new instrument. It must be experienced to be appreciated. Pedals are currently available direct from the manufacturer, Scan-Bloc Trading & Mfg.

THE NUMBERS

Single pedal: **$575**
Double pedal (right or left): **$995**
Hi-Hat: Special order, call for price. Shipping & handling is $20 within the US; California residents must pay sales tax.

(877) 909-3399, www.scan-beat.com.

Tama Kenny Aronoff Trackmaster Limited Edition Signature Snare

As Good As Vintage

HITS
smart finish and ornamentation

extremely sensitive

tremendous dynamic range

MISSES
pricey

by T. Bruce Wittet

A couple of years ago Tama collaborated with Kenny Aronoff on two gunmetal black snare drums. Dubbed Trackmasters, they came in two sizes: 5x14 and 4x15. Now Tama has come up with a limited-edition 6½x14 model. And I do mean limited: Only thirty will be available. I won't harp on the close resemblance to vintage (and reissue) Ludwig Black Beauties, an effect heightened by the engraved leafy patterns on the black shell. John Aldridge of *Not So Modern Drummer*, who did the artful chiselling, will even engrave your name on a tag bolted to the shell.

When you think of Kenny Aronoff, you think of a guy who can slam his kit hard in stadiums yet needs a drum that will yield subtleties in a studio environment. When you think of historic Black Beauties (oops, there's that reference again), your thoughts stray to mythical drums with warm tone and a solid crack. Well, my testing of the Aronoff Limited Edition revealed such a drum. It displayed a delightful balance of tone and volume.

Looks Can Kill

The glossy black-over-brass shell on the 6½x14 Aronoff is elegant. The nickel plating (as opposed to chrome) is rich. And *everything* is engraved: the shell, the lugs, the rims, *and* the strainer. A while back I purchased a 4x15 Tama Trackmaster "off the rack," and only the *shell* was engraved. What gives? I asked Tama's Paul Specht about this, and he explained that my drum is a production model, whereas our review drum is a limited edition. If it goes into full production, it will feature noticeably less engraving.

Because I am afflicted with ADD—Anal Drummer Disorder—I tend to zero in on tiny details, many of which often amount to nothing. For example, when tweaking the drum for its first test, I couldn't get the snare strands to sit flush, no matter how hard I tried. The snare bed was shallow, and Tama's proven strainer held its ground, so there were no problems there.

As it turned out, my concerns were for nought. There wasn't even a *hint* of extraneous snare rattle/buzzing, and the drum was hypersensitive to ghost notes. The lesson here is to put away the magnifying glass and *play* the thing.

Bringing Kenny To The Gig

I took the Aronoff drum to a loud, unmiked gig. I'm happy to report that it elevated rimshot backbeats to the level of a religious experience. Any stick seemed to do the trick, be it a Pro-Mark 747 hickory, a Firth 3A American Classic, an Easton 5A, or a Regal Tip 7A. In each instance, I enjoyed the blend of high-end snare sizzle, fatness in the lower midrange, and significant but not overbearing attack.

Later in the night, when the band came up in volume, I found myself tightening the drumhead to get more cut. Had Tama fitted the drum with die-cast rims, I would have gotten more crack, but I might have lost body in favor of bite. For that reason, I applaud Kenny's choice of triple-flanged rims. Besides, even with the delicate Regal Tip 7A, the country cross-stick sound was full and penetrating.

A couple of diverse singer/songwriter gigs later, I was firm in my conclusion. Tama has created a drum that can shout—or blend—into any musical setting.

You Get What You Pay For...Maybe More

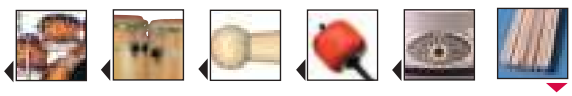
Kenny Aronoff can afford to collect pricey vintage drums. With the Trackmaster series, however, he introduced affordable new drums that speak as well as any antique. Now, to be honest, the 6½x14 Limited Edition model can't really be called "affordable." Still, it certainly costs less than an engraved Ludwig or Leedy from the 1920s. Speaking of which, I put the review drum up against five of my own vintage brass drums, and the Aronoff model shone as brightly as Kenny's shorn dome. It was, er, a black *beauty.*

THE NUMBERS

Description: 6½x14 snare drum, featuring engraved black nickel-plated brass shell, strainer, and brass Mighty Hoops, fitted with 20-strand Starclassic steel snare wires

List Price: **$1,599.99**

(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.



Regal Tip Thai Sticks

New Designs For "Alternative" Tools

HITS

internal-glue design provides solid feel and durability

unique Fan Thai design unlike that of any other dowel-type stick

MISSES

dowels can break in unwrapped grip area

by Rick Mattingly

The main feature that distinguishes Regal Tip's Thai series of bundled wooden dowels from similar products by other manufacturers is that the Thai models are glued together on the inside of the gripping area—as opposed to only being held together by tape or a band on the outside. The goal was to provide a more solid feel that better resembles that of a traditional drumstick, and also to increase strength and durability.

From left: Fan Thai, Ty Phoon, Thai Stick, and Fatty Thai

The birch dowels are not glued in the area near the tip, which provides the "clicking" sound associated with such beaters. Three of the four models have an adjustable "controller ring" that can be positioned anywhere within the non-glued area. When the ring is nearest the tip, there is practically no clicking sound and the Thai stick performs very much like a traditional drumstick. When

the ring is pushed back into the glued portion, the "click" is maximized.

Each model also has a rubber cap over the butt end of the bundle, so if you want a totally "click-free" sound for certain sections of a song, you can flip the Thai stick over and use the back end.

When I used a Thai Stick on a tom-tom, I could detect differences in the amount of click about every half inch that I moved the ring. Played on a snare drum, some of the more subtle differences were lost in the snare sound, but I could still hear a difference at least every inch that I moved the ring.

Thai Stick

The basic Thai Stick has nineteen thin dowels. It measures 16" long by about $\frac{5}{8}$" in diameter, and the non-glued portion is $3\frac{1}{2}$" long. Even with that diameter, the Thai Stick weighs less than a solid drumstick of that size would, and the sound it produced when the ring was nearest the tip was comparable to that of a lightweight drumstick. As the rubber O-ring was moved away from the tip, the "clicking" sound became more obvious, while the overall volume decreased. With the ring placed near the tip, a solid blow produced a *double forte* (*ff*) sound; with the ring completely off the non-glued area, the same stroke produced about a mezzo-piano (*mp*).

Ty Phoon

The Ty Phoon model is very similar to the basic Thai Stick—same number and size of dowels, same length, and same diameter. The difference is that the non-glued portion of the stick is 6" long and the ring is a $\frac{1}{4}$"-wide piece of white flexible plastic. The rubber cap at the butt end is also white (the caps on the other three models are black) and carries the signature of Barenaked Ladies drummer Tyler Stewart. There was virtually no difference between the sound and feel of the Thai Stick and the Ty Phoon when the rings were at the same position within the $3\frac{1}{2}$" area starting at the tip. But once the ring on the Ty Phoon model was moved into the area where the Thai Stick is glued but the Ty Phoon isn't, the Ty Phoon produced a lighter sound with more click.

Fatty Thai

The Fatty Thai is named for the size of its individual dowels, which are nearly twice as thick as those used on the Thai Stick and Ty Phoon. But since there are only seven dowels per stick, the overall diameter is about $\frac{1}{8}$" less than the other two models. Like the Thai Stick, the non-glued area is $3\frac{1}{2}$" long. The volume is comparable to that of the Thai Stick, but the clicking sound is more pointed and defined. Even with the O-ring as close as possible to the tip, there is still some audible click.

Fan Thai

The fourth model, called Fan Thai, is unique among this group in that the 6" non-glued playing end flares out slightly, somewhat like a wire brush. With most other bundled dowel rods, only two or three of the dowels actually come in direct contact with the drumhead. With the Fan Thai, anywhere from six to eight of the dowels make direct contact, providing a fatter impact sound. Of course, that's assuming you hold the Fan Thai so that you are striking with the "flat" side of the flair. You can also turn the Fan Thai so as to strike with the side of the flair. In that case, three or four of the dowels will make contact with the head, producing less impact sound from the drum but more of a "clicking" sound.

Unlike the other models, the Fan Thai has no adjustable ring, so there is only one level of "click," which is more pronounced than even the Fatty Thai. Of all the bundled dowel rods I've played, this one has the softest sound, falling somewhere between a regular stick and Blasticks.

Conclusion

The internally glued handles on Regal Tip's Thai Stick series do seem to provide a more solid feel than that of other, similar products. In terms of durability, the Thai models stood up better to rimshots than other bundled dowels I've used. (That being said, I still wouldn't use such a stick for prolonged rimshots.)

The downside of the Thai Sticks' glued-but-not-wrapped design is that when a dowel *does* break, it can do so clear back in the grip area, and jab the inside of your hand. (*MD* editor Bill Miller experienced this phenomenon.) I had no such problem, but heavy players may want to consider taping the grip area as a precaution.

The Thai sticks offer a new approach to an alternative drumming tool that has become pretty well universally accepted. I particularly liked the sound and feel provided by the Fan Thai. All in all, these are nifty additions to any drummer's bag of tricks.

THE NUMBERS

Thai Sticks: 19 thin birch dowels, 16" long, $\frac{5}{8}$" overall diameter, non-glued portion $3\frac{1}{2}$" long, with adustable o-ring, black end cap

Ty Phoon: 19 thin birch dowels, 16" long, $\frac{5}{8}$" overall diameter, non-glued portion 6" long, with adjustable o-ring, white end cap

Fatty Thai: 7 thicker birch dowels, 16" long, $\frac{1}{2}$" overall diameter, non-glued portion 6" long, with adjustable o-ring, black end cap

Fan Thai: 19 thin birch dowels, 16" long, $\frac{5}{8}$" overall diameter, non-glued portion 6" long and flared into "brush-like" shape, black end cap

List price all models: ..... **$22.95 per pair**

(716) 285-3546, www.regaltip.com.

21 albums.
One pair of sticks.

© 2002 Pro-Mark Corporation. We use only non-endangered wood.

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The World's Finest Sticks.™

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Neil Peart

The Fire Returns

Story by William F. Miller
Photos by Andrew MacNaughtan

Neil Peart has lived a life of extremes. He's taken a God-given talent, and through intense focus and total commitment, achieved great things in drumming. No one save Buddy Rich has inspired more drummers the world over than Neil Peart. In his nearly thirty-year career with Rush—including twenty-one gold-or-better albums totaling more than *thirty-five million* copies sold—he's accomplished more in music than most people could ever dream of.

Just what is it about Peart that allowed him to accomplish so much? Ask anyone who has spent time with the man. They'll all give you the same answer. Neil has a deep passion, a *fire*, for what he does. (It's been a favorite topic in his lyric writing.) No great artist achieves without it.

That passion was all but snuffed out five years ago, when Peart's family was rocked by tragedy. In August of 1997, Neil's nineteen-year-old daughter, Selena, was killed in an automobile accident. And then, unbelievably, within a year, his wife Jackie succumbed to cancer. The magnitude of the loss was unthinkable...unimaginable.

How does one go on after experiencing that kind of loss? As brilliant a man as he is, Neil didn't have the answer. So he literally went searching for a reason to live. Peart spent the next couple of years on a solitary journey, motorcycling thousands of miles across North and Central America. It was a much-needed escape, because even *thinking* about anything relating to his previous life brought him nothing but pain.

Peart eventually came back to his home in Canada. He found his drums waiting there, and over the course of a two-week playing jag he reintroduced himself to the joy, excitement, and, yes, frustration of drumming. A little spark was lit...possibly a small chance at life...a reason to go on. But Neil admits that he knew he wasn't ready to step back into the limelight or make the kind of commitment necessary to re-join Rush. It would take another couple of years—and lots of help, love, and support from family and friends—before he would be ready to try.

In January of 2001, Neil Peart, Geddy Lee, and Alex Lifeson finally came together to see if they could reassemble what had once been a great band. According to Neil, "We laid out no parameters, no goals, no limitations, only that we would take a relaxed, civilized approach to the project." The trio worked diligently, methodically writing and recording new material. After a year of starts and stops and hits and misses, the trio emerged with seventy-four minutes of music, making up the material found on their latest offering, *Vapor Trails*.

Surprisingly, Rush 2002 is more aggressive than ever. The guitar solos and keyboards have been replaced by bombast and sheets of sonic intensity. There's also a stronger sense of groove in Peart's playing, something that wasn't as prevalent in the past. Neil says of the new direction, "We envisioned advertising slogans along the lines of, 'If you hated them before, you'll *really* hate them now!'" Reviews may be mixed about the material, but the drumming is strong. In fact, the first cut, "One Little Victory," opens with a slamming double-pedal foray that clearly announces to the world, "He's *baaaack*!"

Peart's drumming prowess has returned, no question about it. At a recent practice session for the fifty-plus-date Rush tour, Neil was incredibly strong. Watching him play at the band's rehearsal space–unamplified–from twenty paces was nothing short of astonishing. *No one* plays with more power than Neil Peart. His style is perfectly suited for stadium performance. But as you'd expect, also within that power is an intellect and wit that enjoys contorting patterns and syncopating fills. And *added* to that is Neil's new appreciation for the groove. It looks like Peart may be gearing up to inspire a whole new generation of drummers—yet again.

Off the drums, Neil has changed. How could such tragic events not affect him? He recently remarried and is doing his best to build a new life. In my many get-togethers with him in the past, there was never any sense of weakness or vulnerability. The old Neil was driven, self-assured, strong, brilliant, and at times a tad aloof. He's different now. Brilliant? No doubt. Confident and strong? Perhaps. Aloof? No way. There's a greater sensitivity in him today, a look of compassion behind the eyes. Neil Peart has emerged from tragedy an even greater human being.

MD: I just want to start off by saying thanks for granting us the interview. I know this is tough for you.

Neil: I haven't done one of these in a long time. I don't know how good it will be.

MD: Let's start with something easy. Your drumming sounds good on *Vapor Trails*. In fact, it's one of your most grooving performances.

Neil: Well, that's a wonderful comment. I'm sure glad to hear it, because I was trying my best to achieve that. The whole way we went about making this record was so different from any we've done in the past that it might have permitted a more grooving approach to come through.

A lot of the songs were just jams, where Geddy and Alex got together in front of a recorder, set up a groove on a rhythm machine, and started playing. And then later, Geddy would go back and sift through those jams and say, "This eight bars is good," "This four bars is good," or, "If we took that two bars and repeated it, that would be good." So they stitched together these things into a structure.

At the same time, I was feeding Geddy lyrics so he could sing over the ideas they were coming up with. And then we did what we call "leap-frogging," where we individually work on the songs ourselves—the drum parts, guitar parts, and vocal/bass parts—without holding up each other and without getting caught up in too much edi-

Victory Drums

Drums: Drum Workshop in candy-apple red with gold-flake finish (with gold-colored hardware)

A. 5x14 Craviotto snare
B. 4x13 piccolo snare
C. 13x15 tom
D. 7x8 tom
E. 7x10 tom
F. 8x12 tom
G. 9x13 tom
H. 12x15 tom
I. 16x16 tom
J. 16x18 tom (suspended)
K. 16x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 13" New Beat hi-hats
2. 10" A splash
3. 20" A crash
4. 16" A crash
5. 10" A splash
6. 16" A crash
7. 22" A Ping ride
8. 14" A Custom hi-hats with 8" splash on top
9. 18" A crash
10. 20" China low
11. 18" Wuhan China

Electronics: Roland V-Drums, Emu 5000 samplers, Roland TD-10 brain with expansion card, Shark trigger pedal (positioned to the left of hi-hat)

aa. V-Drum pad
bb. V-Cymbal pad
cc. V-Cymbal hi-hat pad
dd. V-Drum kick pad
ee. Dauz pad
ff. malletKAT

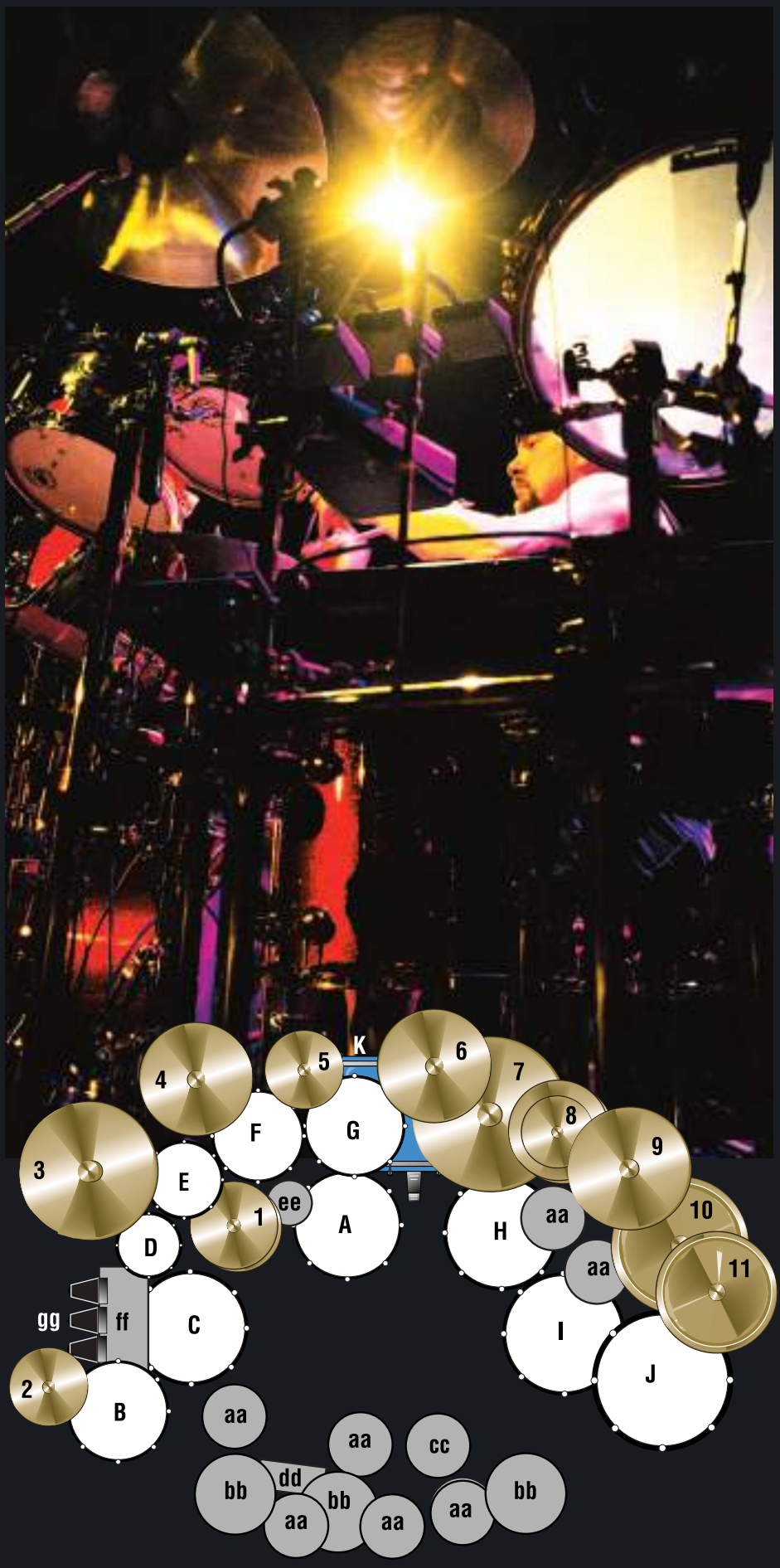
Percussion
gg. cowbells

Hardware: DW, including a DW 5000 double pedal with felt beaters (medium spring tension)

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare batter (fairly tight tension, no muffling) with Diplomat on bottom, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms (medium tension, no muffling) with clear Ambassadors on bottoms, Pinstripe on bass drum batter with Ambassador logo head on front (medium tension, no hole in front head, no muffling)

Sticks: Pro-Mark 747 Neil Peart model (oak)

Drum Tech Extraordinaire: Lorne "Gump" Wheaton



torial commentary from each other.

MD: Can you elaborate on the idea of leap-frogging?

Neil: We start off with that rough tape Geddy will have created, and then Alex will add guitar parts more to the vision he has for the song. Then I'll take that tape and come up with drum parts that I think will work. Then Geddy will respond to *my* drum parts and say, "Well, the bass part would be better if it went like this." Then I'll hear that and it'll give me ideas. So we're constantly improvising and developing the ideas, even though we're never really playing the song together.

MD: It sounds as if you don't like each other.

Neil: [laughs] That's not the case *at all*. We've played together for twenty-seven years. I was actually thinking today about how many times we've played together. It's something like tens of thousands of times. We really know each other well as players and as people. So it isn't necessary for us to sit in a room and hash it out all at the same time.

Our current thinking goes on to that work tape. My current thinking on the drum part goes on there, and then it's talked about, of course, in between each of those takes: "Well, I like what you're doing, but it might be cool if you did this."

"There was a period of time when I was *certain* I would never play drums again. Nothing mattered very much."

A good example of this process is "One Little Victory." I'd been working on that tune and came up with that double bass part. I thought it worked perfectly for the end of the song. But Geddy said, "That's a great part. You ought to open the song with it. That would just kill." Frankly, I wouldn't have done it that way—I don't think I would have been so assertive—but Geddy suggested it and I said, "Okay, I'll try it."

MD: One thing I'm not clear about is, how did this method of developing parts help you to create a more grooving performance?

Neil: For this record we moved straight into the recording studio, where in the past we'd always go through that process of refinement—arranging the song, working on our parts, and then all being satisfied with them—before we'd go into the studio. I would then go in and record all of the drum parts in two days. I would be focused on producing *that* performance, the one that we had come up with during our refining process.

That method has good qualities, in that it would sometimes drive me to a level that I hadn't reached before, just putting that pressure on me to push a little further. So I like that in a way. But for *Vapor Trails* we decided to stay in the same studio where we were doing the writing and pre-production and just gradually start recording songs that we thought were ready. It was a much more gradual process.

If I went in to work on a drum part, I could just play around with it and not be so stressed about it. There was never any pressure that it *had* to be the final take. A lot of the drum tracks were spontaneous in the sense that things had never been played

that way before. It was an easier way to work.

MD: I can see how that attitude would help you groove. But you also mentioned earlier that the feel was something you were very concerned about.

Neil: The pulse was a big factor in my thinking. In the past, I would focus on the technical parts. That was the challenge, pulling off some little bit that I liked. That's what I was listening for. This time I was thinking about smoothing out my parts, making them less jarring for the listener.

MD: So would you say this is one way you've grown musically during the long break away from the band?

Neil: I suppose so. Not only should your approach to the instrument grow with time, but so should your understanding of what you're trying to achieve. I found that for this record I was thinking on different levels, trying to satisfy what I wanted to hear in any given song. My critical faculties have refined and developed to where I'm listening for a whole musical effect to come out of the technique, not the technique itself.

MD: Besides the focus on the groove, the other thing that jumps out about *Vapor Trails* is the aggressive nature of the material and the production. This is one of the heaviest records you guys have ever done.

Neil: Yeah, it is, and that's another thing that grew organically. A distinct thing about the way the three of us work together is that we never sit down on day one and lay out a format and say, "Okay, here's what we want to do. We want to shape it like this. I want this kind of feel. And I want a certain number of songs with these themes."

MD: I assumed you did that.

Neil: No, not at all. To the total contrary, we let things grow. We took our time. It had been five years since we worked together on a creative level, so we deliberately made it gradual and relaxed. We paced it in a way that would be organic. We didn't set any deadlines. We didn't say, "By four weeks we want all the songs to be written, and three weeks later we'll be ready for demos." We didn't lay it out that way at all. We just started working: "Let's see what happens."

I described the way that Geddy and Alex worked together just playing, basically

Snare Drum Selection

by Neil Peart

I have said before, notably in my instructional video *A Work In Progress*, that I like to have a wide range of snare drums available in the studio. The choice of a particular snare for a song is influenced by several factors: the character of the song I'm playing and the drum part I have created for it, my taste in sounds, and the sonic environment of the room in which I'm playing.

The recording of *Test For Echo* was a graphic example, for I had chosen an *array* of snare drums during the pre-production process in a small studio, only to find that the big room at Bearsville Studios "required" a snare drum choice one degree brighter—i.e., a different drum.

For touring I use a "versatile" instrument that can cover all areas well, though even that is subject to change. For many years I depended upon an old Slingerland wood-shell snare for that purpose, but then it became supplanted by a DW Edge snare that combines wood and brass elements.

Now, as I rehearse for this *Vapor Trails* tour, I find that I've been favoring the DW Craviotto model, just because it sounds so good in the warehouse where I'm working. But again, that is subject to change when we move into full production rehearsals in an arena.

During the songwriting and pre-production work for the *Vapor Trails* album, as I played each of the songs to refine my part and its execution, I tried different snare drums from my ever-growing selection. Listening to the playback, I could compare how each one worked in a particular song.

I am fortunate that my tech, Lorne "Gump" Wheaton, has good ears for what I'm after. While the recording engineer is busy with the overall sound as well as each of the other details of sound and performance, Lorne will listen for the nuances of the snare drum as I play. Then, between takes, he will give me a reliable report on what the current candidate sounds like, and we'll discuss other options.

So given the above foundation, what follows is the selection of snare drums I used for each song on *Vapor Trails*. In that particular room, for those particular songs, the Yamaha Elvin Jones model proved to be the most versatile, showing up on more than half the tracks. (Though the wooden hoops that are a standard feature on the drum didn't survive my abuse. We switched to metal.) From the driving dynamics of "One Little Victory" and "Peaceable Kingdom" to the more rooted timekeeping of "Ghost Rider" and "Sweet Miracle," this drum was a joy to play, and obviously gave great results in the studio.

A similar versatility applied to the Yamaha bamboo shell, which sounded as crisp and bright as one would expect from that material, but still worked in the more sensitive role required in the song "Vapor Trail," for example (the intro to which also features "detail" work on a 13" DW piccolo, by the way).

I've always liked wooden piccolo snares, and it was a pleasure to find a use for the 14" DW model in "Earthshine," and the same with the 5x14 Craviotto snare that has become my current rehearsal mainstay, for it worked best on two of the tracks as well.

"One Little Victory"—Yamaha 7x14 maple Elvin Jones model (with metal hoops, not standard wood)

"Ceiling Unlimited"—Yamaha 7x14 maple Elvin Jones model

"Ghost Rider"—Yamaha 7x14 maple Elvin Jones model

"Peaceable Kingdom"—Yamaha 7x14 maple Elvin Jones model

"The Stars Look Down"—Yamaha 7x14 maple Elvin Jones model

"How It Is"—Yamaha 5x14 bamboo

"Vapor Trail"—Yamaha 5x14 bamboo

"Secret Touch"—Yamaha 7x14 maple Elvin Jones model

"Earthshine"—$3^1/_2$x13 DW maple piccolo

"Sweet Miracle"—Yamaha 7x14 maple Elvin Jones model

"Nocturne"—5x14 DW Craviotto

"Freeze"—5x14 DW Craviotto

"Out Of The Cradle"—Yamaha 5x14 bamboo

stitching ideas together. But that was a process that took weeks. I was working on lyrics at the same time, but there were no songs coming out. So I was on hold at that point. I actually started writing a book to fill the time, which is called *Ghost Rider*, about my motorcycling travels over the past few years. But I was in kind of a waiting mode.

MD: I guess at that point you weren't drumming a lot. What was going on with your playing?

Neil: Actually, besides writing, I was practicing every day. I was playing all of the time, which was great because it helped me fine-tune my skills. I'd go in there every day and work on something and record it myself as a demo for my own reference.

MD: The three of you were all in the same location?

Neil: Right. We stayed in a small studio here in Toronto, with me at one end of the building writing lyrics and playing drums and Geddy and Alex at the other end working on ideas. We actually refined the studio, because we didn't want to be forced into another facility to make the record. We completely changed the room to make it sound good for drums. And we did it inexpensively. We put up sheets of wallboard where required and livened the room.

We didn't feel any pressure regarding how much time we were taking, partly because we weren't working in some expensive studio environment. It was our space, our own little music factory that we would go to every day to do our work.

MD: In that setting, I would think it might be hard to know when a record was finished. You could just keep working on parts….

Neil: We didn't even add up the number of songs, to give you an example of how casual we were about it. We just kept writing. We didn't time them out to see if we had enough for a finished CD. Once we had ten songs we started to think, "Well, maybe that's enough." But then Geddy and Alex said, "No, we're not done writing yet." They felt they needed more pieces of music to completely contain all they wanted to express.

I think that Geddy and Alex had certain inner musical agendas of their own for what they wanted to accomplish. For instance, I know that Alex was determined not to have any keyboards on the record. He wanted to cover that role texturally and harmonically on the guitar.

MD: Did you have an individual agenda? The reason I ask is, there's a certain amount of swagger coming from the drum chair. It wasn't just volume….

Neil: No, I understand. I think I know what you're getting at, and it intrigues me. I think what *was* going on in the drum parts was an adrenaline factor, which really pumped up the performance. While I'd like to think I was playing with a bit of swagger, as you say, I think it was more a case of my being very excited about the material and about being back together making music I love with my friends.

MD: You can hear that in the music.

Neil: Yeah, I think there's also a new level of freshness for me, coming back to the instrument with a new sense of rededication. During my time away I really was repelled by anything that was so central to my life, like drumming and music. I didn't play for two years. I didn't *touch* a drumstick for two years. Everything that had

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been the center of my life before was obviously not good for me emotionally, so I wanted nothing to do with it.

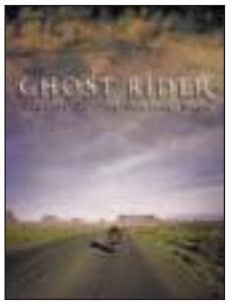
When I did come back and play, it was when I was at the very lowest point. I was so desperate. It was like, What can I do now? But the answer came to me: I'll play the drums.

I rented a little rehearsal studio, took a drumset in there, and played every day. I started surrendering to drumming and exploring it in an organic way. At a certain point I realized I was telling my story on the drums. I was playing through every emotion the past two years had put me through. There were the angry parts, the sorrowful parts, the traveling parts: "Okay, this is me on the road," "This is me really mad." The drums were helping me express my feelings, my story. It showed me that the drums were still an instrument I could communicate through and that I could surrender to.

That all happened during a two-week period, where I poured myself into the drums and nourished myself with them. And then I realized, Okay, I'm ready to play, but I'm not ready to work. I knew I couldn't face the pressure of collaboration and the ambition of creating and being responsible to other people. I knew I didn't have the strength for any of that. But I knew I *could* play if I wanted to, that I *could* tell my story, and that I had something to communicate. That was a really important turning point for me. And even though it was almost another two years before that bore fruit, it still took seed in my mind as something to hold on to.

MD: Was there ever a point during those

Ghost Rider
Riding The Healing Road



Within a ten-month period, Neil Peart suffered family losses so devastating that they left him a ghost—physically a man but with nothing inside: no hope, meaning, faith, or desire to keep living. One year after the first tragedy, Neil was literally choosing between life and his own death. Finally, all he could decide upon was motion. He got on his BMW R1100GS motorcycle, and over the next fourteen months rode 55,000 miles in search of a reason to live.

On a journey of escape, exile, and exploration, Neil traveled from Quebec to Alaska, down the Canadian and American coasts and western regions, to Mexico and Belize, and finally back to Quebec. While riding "the healing road," Neil recorded in his journals his progress and setbacks in the grieving/healing process, and the pain of constantly reliving his losses.

He also recorded with colorful, entertaining, and moving artistry the enormous range of his travel adventures, from the mountains to the sea, from the deserts to Arctic ice, and the dozens of memorable people, characters, friends, and relatives he met along the way.

Published by ECW Press (www.ecwpress.com), *Ghost Rider* is a bold, brilliantly written, intense, exciting, and ultimately triumphant narrative memoir from a gifted writer and musician, who started out as a man reduced to trying to stay alive by staying on the move.

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Neil Peart

bleak years where you felt like you just wouldn't come back to music and drumming at all?

Neil: There was a period of time when I was *certain* that I would never play drums or write lyrics or a book again. Because who cares? What does it matter? It didn't matter. Nothing mattered very much.

The only thing I was motivated to do was travel, to just go down the road every day to see what was over the next hill or around the next corner. Hope was the only muscle at work then, the hope that maybe something would come up. I kept saying to myself, Something will come up, something will come up. It's probably the only thing that kept me alive.

I was fortunate at the time to be able to retire from the world like that and to have the time to build a life again. Everything had been so destroyed and ripped out from under me that I didn't have a world to have faith in anymore. But after a lot of time, life became beautiful and precious again.

Sorry. I didn't think I would get into these things.

MD: And you didn't think this was going to be a good interview.

Neil: [smiles] Let's get back to drumming.

MD: Okay. Listening to *Vapor Trails*, there are moments where it seems you're doing a good Keith Moon impersonation.

Neil: Great! I'm glad you picked up on that. In fact, I was thinking about Keith quite a bit. Interesting story: During the time I was rediscovering music, I was moving house and digging out old boxes of records, things I hadn't listened to in a long time. I didn't want to hear more recent music, because it made me think about things. But the older stuff from my youth brought some measure of happiness.

I went back and listened to some of the best of Keith Moon's playing. In listening to him on the *Tommy* album, well, I was full of admiration. Keith's playing on that record is sublime. The same with *Who's Next*. But *Tommy*, to me, is such a masterpiece of drumming. It shows how smooth and flowing Keith's insanity could be.

Around that same time, I read that biography of him, *Moon: The Life And Death Of A Rock Legend*. It's very well done. So I was thinking a lot about Keith, and looking at his life. And again, he was the total hero of my teenage years. But in the actual dynamic of his life, he was pretty much

washed up as a drummer before he was thirty because of his insanities and his indulgences. He died at the age of thirty-two, leaving behind a wife and daughter. I couldn't help but be struck by that.

But anyway, re-examining how great Keith was at that time revitalized that part of my drumming. And yes, there were certain parts on this record where I thought, Let's do it the Keith Moon way.

MD: In the past, you always seemed to draw inspiration from music and drummers playing in the current scene. Were there any modern influences in your playing?

Neil: Hmmm. It's strange with modern music right now. As always, I find myself enjoying it. I listen to modern rock radio and like it, but it's not very much drummers' music right now. I love what's developed between rock and rap, like that Linkin Park song "In The End." I think that's a masterpiece of combining influences.

I enjoy the music, but I'm not hearing a lot of interesting drumming lately. Limp Bizkit and those types of bands are not really drummers' music from a player's point of view. Maybe I'm wrong and maybe there are other examples that I'm not familiar with, but when I hear that music that's the one thing that occurs to me. I can't imagine it's very exciting to be a drummer in a band like that.

MD: Because it's more focused on laying down the time?

Neil: Yeah. There doesn't seem to be a lot of space for interesting things drum-wise. I mean, many of those drummers sound like good players. But the rhythms tend to be beat-oriented. It reminds me of something Tony Williams said about rock drumming: Rock drummers don't play drums, they play beats. I think that may be true now more than ever.

MD: There is a sense that, because of things like digital editing, drummers' parts are being heavily "adjusted" and processed.

Neil: Why is that happening? Shouldn't it be the drummer's decision? For instance, in the making of this record, we used editing to capture spontaneity. If there was a time when I was whipping out on a part or playing one of those crazy Keith Moon–inspired fills and only did it a certain way once, then we used that part. But there was no manipulation going on of moving beats or things like that to make me sound better.

Technology can be our friend in terms of allowing spontaneity and encouraging freshness and capturing it. But I would never be satisfied with having somebody take my drum part and correct it. I would do that myself with sweat and blisters. That's the nature of what you're supposed to do with practice: "Okay, I'll do it again and do it *better*." That would be my choice.

MD: Speaking of practice, you were away from drumming for such a long time. Was it tough to build back your ability?

Neil: I was thinking that it would be tough to "rebuild" my playing, but everything came back so readily and so naturally. Everything that I could play before I could play again. Of course, some transitions were rusty—getting one arm over the other, for instance. Physical dexterity like that took a couple of days to smooth out. But as far as actual playing, I think the muscle memory must be so deep after all the years I'd been playing—thirty-five years at that time. I've played a lot of drums in thirty-five years. It wasn't going

to go away.

MD: At times you play so hard and in such a physical way. Did you have to build up your endurance and strength?

Neil: I kept up the stamina through other things. I did a lot of cross-country skiing and a lot of hiking. I stayed physically active. I've never turned into a slug, physically, so that wasn't a problem. The process of getting the calluses back on the hands was the only thing necessary to rebuild.

MD: After such a long break, I was wondering if, when you returned to the kit, did it feel comfortable? Or did you need to reposition things?

Neil: I didn't change a thing. In fact I'm using the same DW kit I used on the last record and tour. The biggest change I went through occurred years ago, when I first started studying with Freddie Gruber. I completely changed my setup at that time to be more natural and more ergonomic.

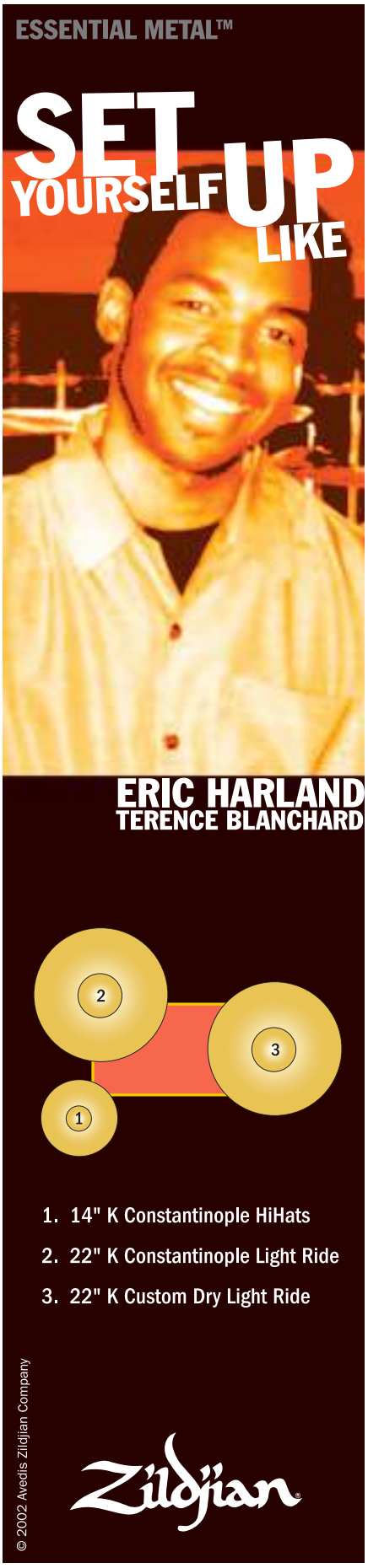
The only thing I did experiment with this time while we were recording was my snare drum selection. I ended up using a combination of DW and Yamaha snare drums. I've always liked the DWs. And the people at Yamaha were very nice and gave me two very special drums that I used quite a bit on the record. One had a bamboo shell that was very bright-sounding. It worked well on the record. [For more info on Neil's snare drum choices, see the sidebar on page 63.]

MD: What about things like cymbals? Most drummers like to experiment with new models.

Neil: Yeah, but the classic Zildjians are simply the sound that I want to hear out of a cymbal. It's a very musical, controlled swell. There are other cymbal sounds I like and that I like to hear *other* people play. But for my voice, it's the Zildjians. I've been playing them for years.

MD: You're in the process of preparing for a long tour. And one of the highlights of a Rush concert is your extended drum solo, which is somewhat composed. What are you doing to prepare for it?

Neil: It's a good time to discuss this because I'm working on the solo now. I'm still trying to decide on an approach. I can look at the solo that evolved up to the last tour, which was a complete piece of music that expressed my influences, background,



and explorations. It's my past and present all contained within one solo. I could easily go back to something similar to it.

Another part of my mind, though, is saying to not do *anything* like the previous solos. I'm thinking of other ways that I might approach it. Of course, I feel that I want to have some of the sections that I've used over the years. They've survived a long time because they're autobiographical or close to me. They help me get across what I want to express musically in a solo in terms of presenting a complete array of things that a drum solo can be in terms of rhythm, dynamics, and expression.

MD: When most drummers take a break from playing, they come back to the kit with a fresh approach. Coming back to the drums after such a long break, did you find that you had a lot of new ideas?

Neil: Yes, I found myself going places that I hadn't been before. Some are tiny little baby things that I almost hesitate to recount because the principle is more important, the movement as a whole is more important.

MD: What would be a small example?

Neil: One would be in the song "Ghost Rider." I was looking for a subtle fill to lead into a verse. I ended up playing hits on a few cymbals. I'd never done anything like that before. It's nothing technically, but I was very happy with the effect. I didn't want to do a drum fill, and I didn't want to just come in with time on the downbeat, so I tried that and it worked.

When I hear things like that I secretly smile to myself, because it's something I don't think will impress a listener or another drummer, but it just pleases me to have gone somewhere different and accomplished something musically in a fresh way.

MD: It's great to hear you be so excited about drumming again. You seem very committed to the music.

Neil: Commitment is the word. I have a commitment to the music, and to Geddy and Alex. They've been such supportive friends to me through all of this. No one could have been more sympathetic, compassionate, and understanding. When we came back together to work it was because I had a commitment to them.

MD: You're turning fifty this coming September 12. What are your thoughts now that you're at the half-century mark concerning life, music, and drumming?

Neil: I guess my understanding of life has unwillingly been enlarged to a great degree, in that I've been to the blackest place that life can take you. With the support of friends and family, I've fortunately led myself through a lot of that dark time. I never knew how important people could be until I really needed them.

The age thing honestly doesn't figure in my thinking. I've read that everyone has an inner age that they think they are, regardless of their actual age. I really think of myself as being about thirty. In modern life it's a matter of keeping your prime going as long as you can.

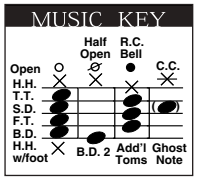
Let's take that metaphor into the world of drumming. You go through the time of learning and experimenting, and you develop your voice as a musician. As long as you can sustain that prime of your life musically, mentally, emotionally, and physically, then that's your time.

MD: Hearing you talk about all of this, it really seems as if you still have the fire.

Neil: Well, I lost it for a while. But I have it back.

Rush's **Neil Peart** Vapor Trails

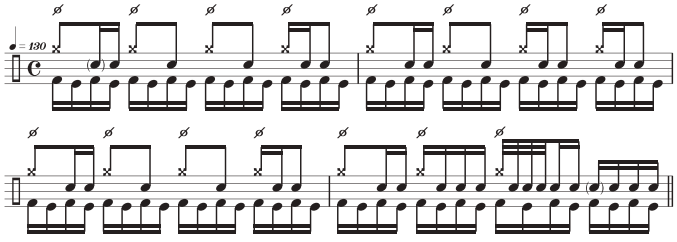
by Ed Breckenfeld



The first Rush album of the twenty-first century exhibits a high-energy, modernized, radio-ready sound. Neil Peart's drumming seems more groove-oriented than ever before. But, of course, Neil's fans get their money's worth, as *Vapor Trails* abounds with explosive drum fills and patterns. Here are a few examples.

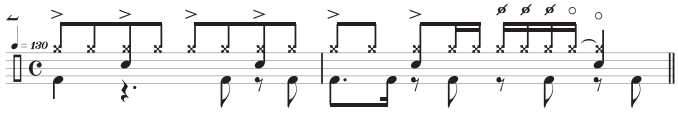
"One Little Victory"

Neil fires the first salvo, as the album opens with this jarring double-kick train beat.



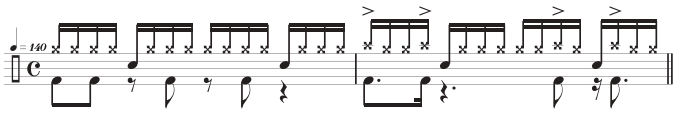
"Ghost Rider"

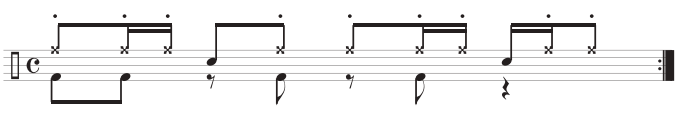
Even in a straightforward rock groove, Neil can always find a flourish to make the tune his own.



"How It Is"

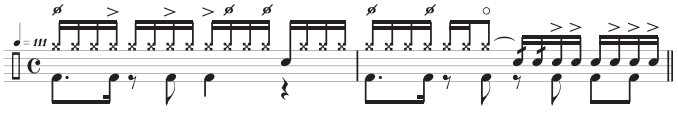
Neil uses 16th-note hi-hat patterns throughout *Vapor Trails* to energize the songs. In the second verse of this tune, he mixes in a few syncopated crashes.



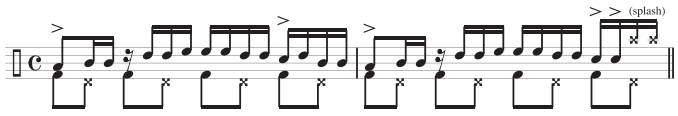
In the last chorus, Neil's signature ride cymbal playing brings the song to its climax.

Andrew MacNaughtan

"Vapor Trail"

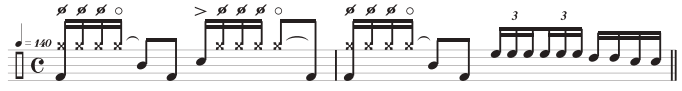
The first verse of the title track features some wonderfully expressive hi-hat and snare drum work.



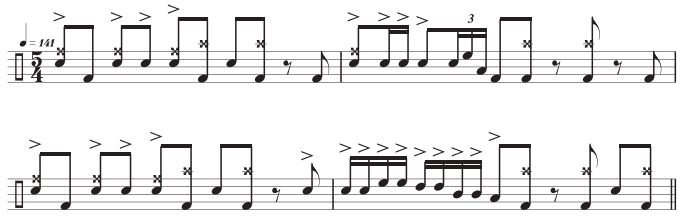
This melodic tom-tom groove (beginning on a floor tom to the left of Neil's hi-hat) adds an earthy flow to the chorus, with a couple of splash cymbals thrown in for sweetening.



"Nocturne"

An ebb-and-flow hi-hat part creates tension leading up to this song's final chorus. The tension-releasing fill is another Peart classic.

"Freeze"

It wouldn't be a Rush album without some odd time signatures. Here's Neil dancing around offbeats in a 5/4 section.



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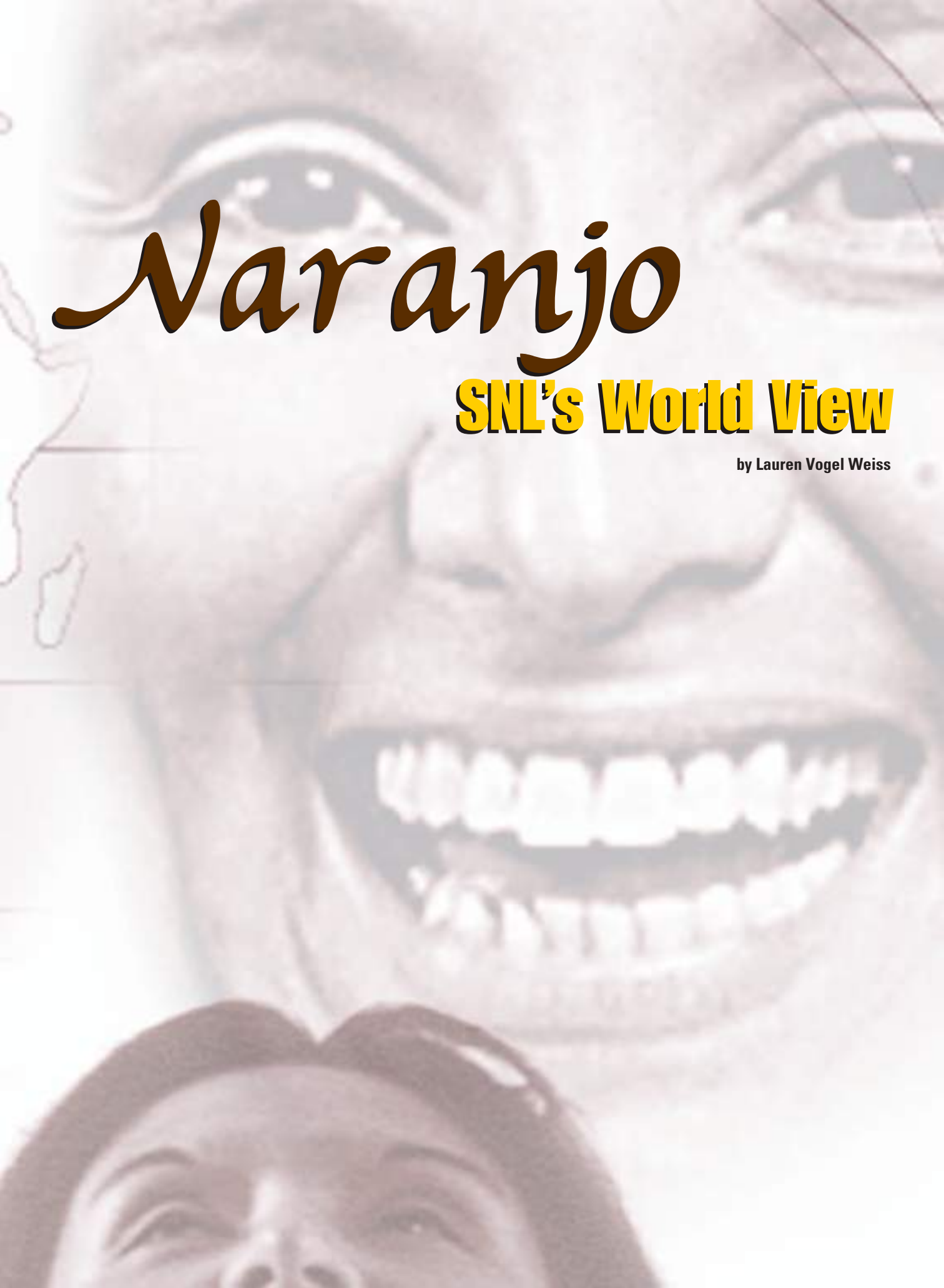


Naranjo

SNL's World View

by Lauren Vogel Weiss

"The most compelling music comes from a powerful community. I think that's one of the reasons West Africa has been the core of popular music all over the world."

You're watching *Saturday Night Live*, one of the longest-running series on television. Can you name the percussionist in the band? Perhaps you were in the newly renovated New Amsterdam Theater on Broadway during the first two years of the mega-hit musical *The Lion King*. Did one of the percussionists look familiar? Women were not allowed to play the gyil in Africa until 1988. Do you know who broke that gender barrier?

It's hard to believe that these "three" percussionists are actually one musician. Valerie Dee Naranjo is a true "world" percussionist, having performed on six continents during the past two and a half decades. She combines a traditional percussion background—with an emphasis in marimba and keyboard percussion—with a little of her Native American background along with a generous helping of her love of African instruments—especially the gyil.

Salvino Campos

Ron Eckstein

Ron Eckstein

For twenty Saturday nights each year, Valerie Dee Naranjo can be found in Studio 8H in NBC's Rockefeller Center—and on countless television screens across the country—playing everything from African percussion and bodhran to glockenspiel and xylophone in the *SNL* band. Naranjo met *SNL* bandleader Lenny Pickett at a drum shop many years ago, and later performed with his instrumental ensemble in Europe. He called her in 1995, looking for "not the typical pop percussionist," and she's been with the *SNL* band ever since.

What's involved in putting together the music for such a popular program? "If something needs to be prerecorded for the cartoons or mock commercials," Valerie explains, "we meet at one o'clock on the Friday before a show. We're typically given an hour and a half to rehearse and record. Once I arrive and see the music for the first time, I choose the instruments I'll play and we'll do it in one or two takes."

How does Valerie decide what to play? "I get everything from pieces of music that have all the parts written out to tunes that just have bar lines and say 'go for your own,'" she explains with a smile and a shrug of her shoulders. "I listen to the style of the song. If it's reggae, I've got specific ideas. If it's Latin, I have other ideas. Sometimes I have to make some split-second decisions about what instruments to play. Oftentimes during the rehearsal, I'll stop for a few seconds in the middle of a tune and switch instruments, because something might not be working the way I thought it would. That's one of a percussionist's jobs in a band: to provide variety."

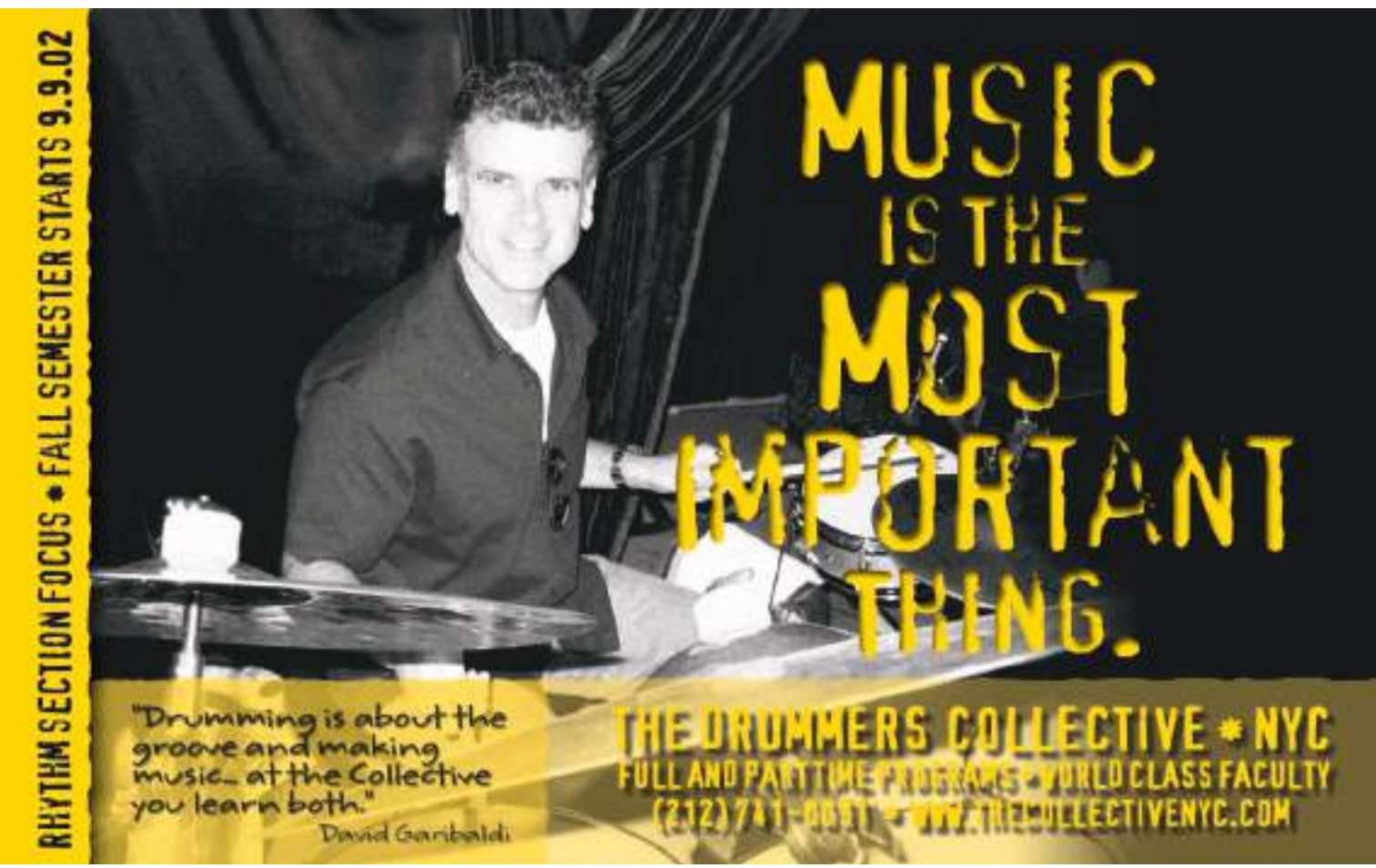
The band gets together at 11:00 A.M. on the day of the show. "That means I have to be there at 10:30," Naranjo laughs. "I tune my instruments up, make sure that I have my game on, and from 11:00 to 1:00 we rehearse anywhere from twelve to twenty-five songs. Many of them we've played before. Sometimes we'll play a song once or twice and then again that night for the live show. If we need to rehearse a live sketch with a cast member who is singing, that would happen at 1:00. Then we're given a break until about 4:15, when we rehearse the monolog with the guest host."

Following a dinner break and time for "hair and make-up"—after all, it *is* live television—the band returns to warm up the studio audience at 7:25 P.M. and do a complete dress rehearsal. That studio audience is released around ten, and while the producers decide what sketches to edit, the band has another break. "At 10:55," Valerie continues, "the band warms up a completely different audience and plays the show, until it ends at 1:00.

"The other musicians are great," Valerie enthuses, "and Shawn Pelton is just the quintessential show drummer. He's wonderful to work with. All of the musicians have a spirit of camaraderie that really makes a high-pressure situation like ours very sweet.

"This is a *thoroughly* multi-percussion gig," Naranjo continues. "For example, in a Motown tune I can be swinging a tambourine with one hand and playing mallet parts with the other. My function is to be the entire percussion section, so my four-mallet independence comes into play often in this gig."

Valerie's interest in percussion can be



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Shawn Pelton On Naranjo

A View From The Kit

Butch Jones

Shawn Pelton is the groovin' drummer in the *Saturday Night Live* band. Shawn plays with Valerie Dee Naranjo each week the show tapes. "She's unique in her concept of combining her background in African music with traditional percussion," Pelton states. "She brings a lot to the table, which is great. It's remarkable that she has such a wide range and can cover so many bases stylistically. It's really unusual to find someone who can be strong in so many areas, such as mallets, as well as all the other percussion instruments."

Does Pelton play his parts differently depending on what instruments Naranjo chooses to play? "Definitely," Shawn says enthusiastically. "I try to listen and totally be aware of how she's coloring the tune and what she's doing. That determines how I approach the tune as well. It would be great if all drummers and percussionists could be aware of each other and have that kind of relationship.

"Working alongside of Valerie has been a real inspiration," Shawn continues, "because she has such commitment as well as a rare artistic sensibility about percussion. Her African experiences give her a unique approach to the choices she makes during a performance. Valerie is always challenging herself in creative ways and finding fresh approaches. She truly has a passion for music that can be felt instantly."

traced to her mother, who wanted to play percussion but never did. "In the Southwest, there weren't too many venues for percussionists except places like bars, so my well-meaning grandfather dissuaded my mother from pursuing percussion studies. She suggested that I play, but I didn't learn that it had been *her* dream until two years ago."

Valerie's grandfather was a farmer—and also a musician. "In our community," Naranjo remembers, "musicians had other occupations, yet they were given a lot of respect. The musicians were responsible for much of the healing energy—the emotional and social health of the community. I had the great fortune of singing traditional Ute and other Native American songs with my family. That had a tremendous influence on my attitude towards music and musicians."

Valerie began her studies with Dr. John Galm at the University of Colorado. Later, on a Bureau Of Indian Affairs scholarship, she attended the University of Oklahoma, where she studied with Dr. Richard Gipson. Upon obtaining a bachelor of music education in vocal and instru-

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Valerie Dee Naranjo

mental music at OU, she studied with marimba virtuoso Leigh Howard Stevens, and then with well-known marimba soloist and composer Gordon Stout at Ithaca College in New York. She received a master's degree in performance and ethnomusicology at Ithaca. Then it was off to New York City to begin the task of being a professional musician.

During her years at the University of Colorado, Valerie was introduced to a doctoral student from Ghana. "His name was Joseph…I never learned his last name," Naranjo admits. "He wanted us to develop our heart and soul to go along with the chops and reading skills. But the impression that stuck with me through the years was him playing these gorgeous little pieces on the marimba that were recollections of gyil pieces from West Africa."

The gyil (pronounced "JEE-lee") is a fourteen-bar African marimba based on a pentatonic scale and played with mallets. The bass line is kept with the left hand while the right hand plays chords and improvisation. The performer also sings while playing. "There's a whole body of barphonic percussion music that exists in

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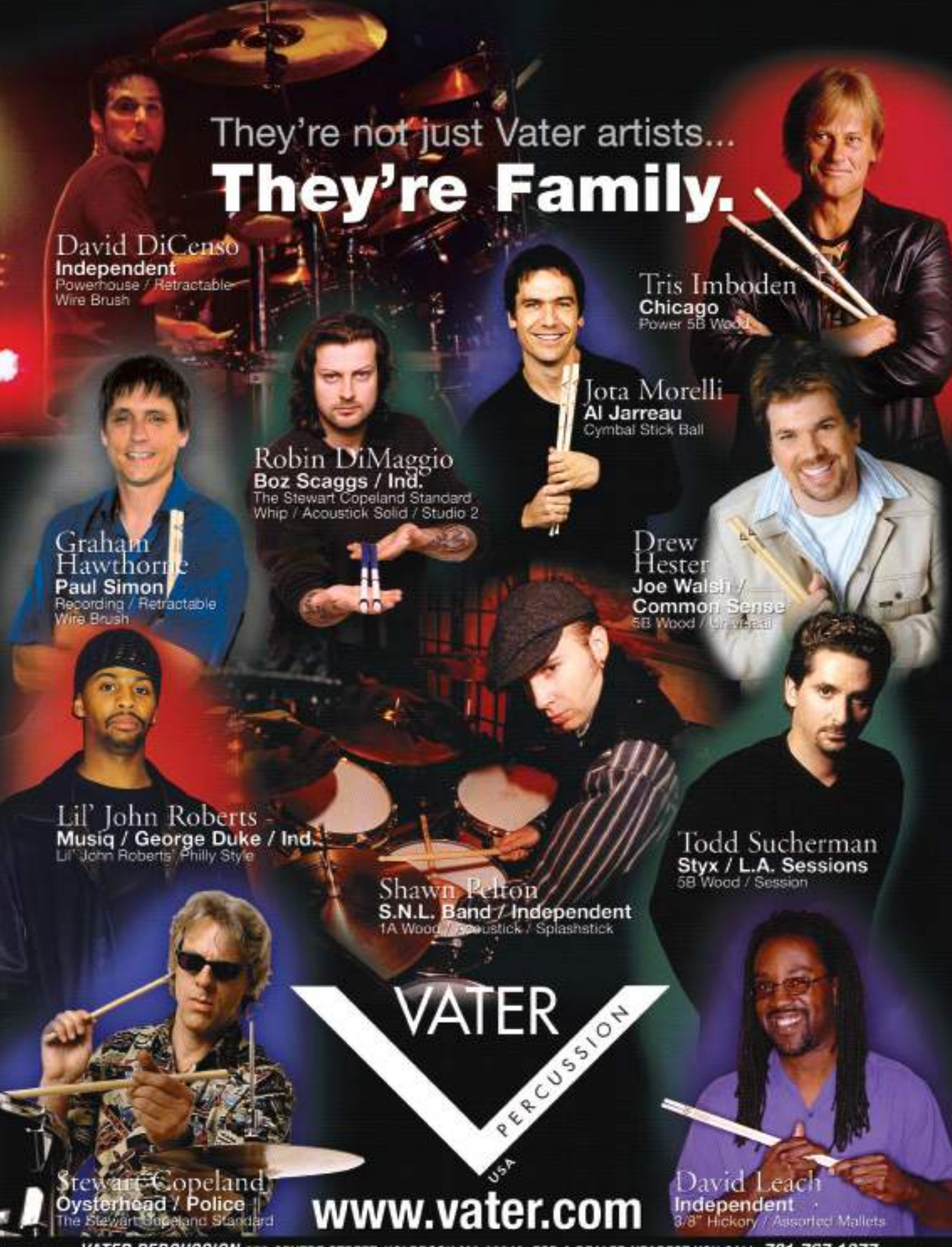

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West Africa that's soulful, complicated, and wonderful," Valerie says. "After graduate school, a friend and I literally combed the streets of Harlem to find a recording of Kakraba Lobi, a master xylophonist from Ghana. After that, I never turned back!"

Naranjo finally met Lobi in 1991, when she studied with him in his native Ghana. "Kakraba is the kind of person who walks into a room, sits behind a gyil, and in a minute's time transforms the energy of a room. At the same time, he just makes your eyes fall out of your head because of the technical prowess that's involved in the traditional music that he's playing."

Valerie has the distinction of being the first woman to play gyil in public, at Ghana's Kobine Festival (1988). She's also the first non-Ghanaian to win a first-place award, which she did in 1996.

"I went to Ghana to learn about the gyil. But what really stayed with me," she confides, "was the realization that the most compelling music comes from a powerful community. I think that's one of the reasons West Africa has been the core of popular music all over the world. It's a very powerful expression of community.

"Another thing that I realized is that a trap drummer is a multi-instrumentalist, much the same way that a gyil player is. It's similar in the sense that a gyil player keeps a groove and bass line with his left hand while he's putting a cymbal-like part on the top of the instrument. Then he's either improvising or playing a melody in the middle of the instrument. I transfer a lot of my ideas from the gyil onto the drumset."

Naranjo used her West African experiences in another highly-visible gig, Disney's Tony award–winning Broadway show *The Lion King*, which features an unprecedented *five* percussionists. "I'd been working with Julie Taymor [who directed *The Lion King* on Broadway] since 1986," Valerie explains, "when she was down in Soho doing a low-budget but high-artistic-value Shakespeare play. After that, she always brought me in as a barphonic specialist. So she'd already had an earful of gyil and other West African instruments. When they approached her to do *The Lion King*, she gave me a call and I was the first musician hired."

Naranjo arranged the African percussion parts for the show, including chromatic marimbas, chromatic gyil, pentatonic gyil, djembe, djun-djun, shekeres, caixis, and different kinds of bells and shakers—not to mention a range of Latin percussion (bongos, conga, and timbales). There were over one hundred fifty percussion instruments involved.

Valerie performed during the show's early weeks in Minneapolis. "We knew that this was going to be a great show, at least from an artistic standpoint, because the first audiences broke into applause and ovations during the middle of the show," she remembers with a laugh. "This is a show for the 21st century, and I had this sense of hopefulness that music from West Africa was going to become part of the experience of Broadway patrons, from six-year-olds to sixty!" (For more information on the *Drummers Of The Lion King*, check out the feature story in the November 1998 issue of *Modern Drummer*.)

During the coming months, Naranjo plans to record the music of Kakraba Lobi on chromatic marimba, with a different

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Valerie Dee Naranjo

drummer for each tune. So far she has lined up her *SNL* bandmate Shawn Pelton as well as percussionist Frank Colón and tabla player Badal Roy. In July she will tour West Africa with Lobi, and in November she'll perform with him at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) in Columbus, Ohio. In between such high-profile gigs, Valerie also plays with the Paul Winter Consort and does Native American music clinics throughout the US.

As if this isn't enough, Valerie is the co-leader (along with Barry Olsen) of Mandara, an ensemble of multi-instrumentalists/vocalists dedicated to performing music of western and southern Africa. (Mandara Music Publications publishes and records the music of Kakraba Lobi, Bernard Woma, Naranjo, and Olsen. For more information, check out their Web site, www.mandaramusic.com.)

Olsen and Naranjo are more than co-leaders of the band they founded in 1983. They've been married for eighteen years. "By presenting ourselves as co-leaders and not as husband and wife, people take us for who we are—co-leaders and musicians in a group," Valerie explains. So what is it like working with your husband? "It's wonderful!" she says with a giggle. "It's very important to be professional with your spouse, just like you would with anyone else. Once you've done that, the doors are wide open. And we've had wonderful times playing together, both on the road and here in the States." You can hear the respect—and love—in her voice when she says, "It helps that Barry is just an absolutely *incredible* musician."

Valerie wanted to share one last bit of advice for young percussionists all over the world: "Enjoy your playing, and play music because you love it. It's a great thing to get the encouragement and approval of those around you. But if you're playing music for that reason, it's going to be hard to go through all the knocks and bumps. It's the energy of music itself that is the key to being a successful player. And to me, a truly successful player is a happy person who can create happiness for others."

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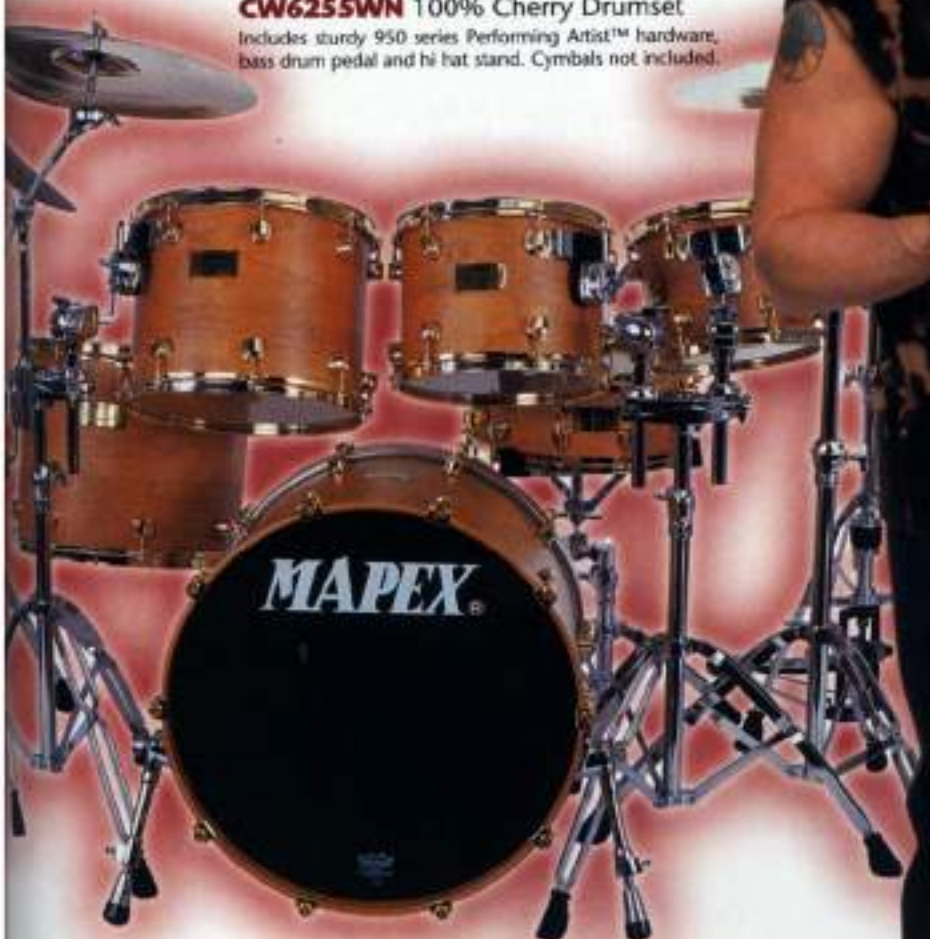

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Eric Harland

Blue Note Ace

When twenty-five-year-old Eric Harland was a teenager, he weighed an astonishing 380 pounds, making him a target of cruel children, mean-spirited teachers, and, sometimes, his own family.

"I would walk into a clothing store and the employees would just laugh," recalls the Texas native. "'Man,' they would say, 'we don't even carry your size in here, bro.' It was automatic, before I could even get in the door. On top of that, kids at school were always calling me fat. It seemed that everyone was against me."

While Eric dealt with taunts at school, life at home was also a little challenging. His religious mother, believing she had seen a heavenly vision when he was born, was convinced that Eric was the messiah-in-waiting. She took him to voodoo priests and witch doctors to confirm her expectations. But blessed with remarkable common sense, sensitivity, and fortitude, Eric found solace in music and struggled to forge his own identity.

Story by Ken Micallef | **Photos by Paul La Raia**

False Alarms Kill
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DILATED PEOPLES

Harland somehow found the strength of character to carry on. In fact, through faith, determination, and talent, he far exceeded anyone's expectations. Currently one of the most in-demand and praised jazz drummers on the East Coast (just ask McCoy Tyner), Eric has recorded over thirty albums and has toured with everyone from vocal great Betty Carter to bassist John Patitucci and saxophonists Joe Henderson and Greg Osby.

"In school, I used music as a way of escape," Harland explains. "I would lock myself up for hours playing with John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. I would play along with Jeff "Tain" Watts and Jack DeJohnette; I internalized their drumming. I was also into Dave Weckl and Steve Gadd, cats who approached the drums in a musical sense."

After collapsing from exhaustion and self-starvation while studying at the Manhattan School of Music in 1996, Harland returned to his home in Texas to get his physical and spiritual house in order. He later returned to New York to tour with Greg Osby. Soon Harland found himself heavily touted by Terence Blanchard, Joe Henderson, and Betty Carter, who he worked with until her death in 1998.

"Betty had this thing for fast tunes," Harland recalls. "She would count them off *real* fast, and we'd have to hold it for long periods of time. She enjoyed watching us sweat."

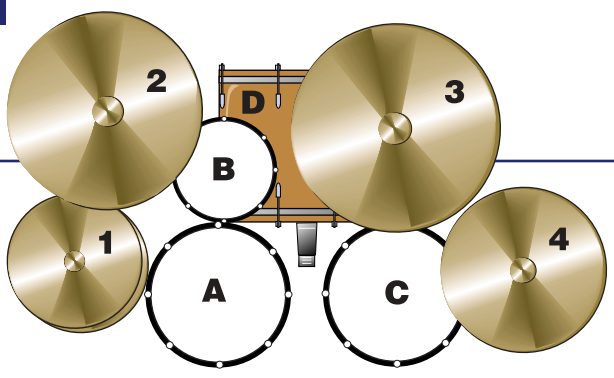
Like other drummers who've learned the ropes with Carter, Harland greatly values his experience with the master. "She encouraged me to be myself no matter what the musical situation. That surprised me, because everyone said she would want me to play like Kenny Washington. But she never demanded that of me. I stayed in her basement for a while, so we talked all the time. She watched me grow. I still feel her presence around me."

A young man who ran with gangs and preached the gospel…who found his future from a chance meeting with jazz trumpeter and historian Wynton Marsalis…and who successfully fuses the styles of Steve Gadd and Jack DeJohnette, Eric Harland is a unique presence. His work on records by such artists as Terence Blanchard, Mark Shim, and Ravi Coltrane is a study in orchestral drumming. Where many drummers approach conventional jazz rhythms using the ride cymbal as the lead voice, Harland uses the entire set and its variety of sounds to underpin, elaborate, and explore the rhythm.

As likely to play a funky Bernard Purdie pattern as a floating Jack DeJohnette pulse, Harland is musical to a fault, but extremely creative—and even courageous. But that's not surprising for a man who has not only weathered the storms of life, but prospered, finding himself in the process.

"I think we're all going through a process in life of gaining a sense of identity and having to defend it at the same time," Harland says. "You have what flows with it and also what contradicts it. That's where you get your strength, from the perseverance of being yourself and the balance of understanding your place in this world."

Eric's Rig



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"My role as a drummer is not just to be the timekeeper, but to be a shaper of the music."

MD: What constantly strikes me about your drumming is your sense of orchestration. You always seem to be using the full set. You're not only keeping time and grooving, but creating a part within the music.

Eric: That comes from playing with Betty Carter. She really taught me how to use the drums as a means of orchestrating within the band. She always told old stories about the guys back in the day, and how they were able to shape the music from the drums.

Terence Blanchard told me about his experiences with Art Blakey. Art was *definitely* about orchestrating the music. He embraced a lot of colors. I always approach the band like a painting, helping to bring out the best of each cat.

MD: How did you develop that approach?

Eric: When I began learning to play jazz when I was fourteen, I approached the drums in a more free or wild setting. I would play all over the set, trying to hit everything in sight as I was listening to *A Love Supreme*. Elvin sounded so good, so I tried to emulate everything he was doing. But instead of learning it note-for-note, I tried to incorporate the whole drumset.

That experience made the drums feel more natural, as opposed to just trying to sound like Philly Joe Jones, where you might not embrace the whole drumset. You might just focus on ride and snare, and not understand the concept of swinging the whole set. Swinging the entire set makes it more powerful with less effort. You play everything evenly, where the whole drumset is moving. All of the elements of the set become like a family.

MD: How do you avoid overplaying with a full-set concept?

Eric: Sensitivity is the key. You have to listen to everyone: how they're playing, the tone of their sound, and the direction they're taking. You have to understand their concept.

MD: What's been the most challenging music you've played?

Eric: Terence Blanchard's music is the most difficult to play. It doesn't have any kind of given direction. You're forced to find a direction with the band. Everyone has to come together and focus on the music, which makes it that much better. When you have those good nights and everyone is in sync, the band becomes like a couple. You really have to depend on each other.

MD: So Blanchard's music doesn't fall into easily definable rhythmic patterns?

Eric: Not at all. It's all about creativity. There's so much room in the music that you *have* to be able to create.

MD: Is he the most challenging artist you've worked with?

Eric: Yes, though his music doesn't sound challenging. It's not like he does odd meters or something. But when you have open music, it's like Miles back in his day. His band would play the head, and after that it would be free and loose. It's a similar concept with Terence.

MD: Do you duplicate the parts you've created in the studio for live performances?

Eric: You have to keep it different every night. My role as a drummer is not just to be the timekeeper, but to be a shaper of the

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MD: You've worked with many leaders, from Joe Henderson to John Patitucci. Why do you think they hire you?

Eric: I love to learn, and I love to adjust. Cats like it when you're learning and really interested in their music, not bombarding them with your own definition of what music is. Everyone has a path, and you have to respect it. It doesn't hurt to listen and to almost start all over again, yet retain your own view. You have to allow it to grow with the leader.

I always try to adjust to what's happening on stage. The music is the main focus. You don't bring contemporary furniture into a medieval room. You have to fit the groove.

MD: What do you bring mentally to each gig?

Eric: Oh man, it's all about the spirit. I had a serious childhood. I received a lot of ridicule from my peers and from my family for being overweight. I went through a lot of drama, and a lot of people turned their back on me. But music for me was always a way to embrace life. It was a path to God. Thanks to the drums and Him, I found a place where I can be myself. I'm always happy when I play. I don't have to try to smile. I can't help but smile when I play. It's so inspiring to me.

MD: How do you approach your drum solos? Do you develop the theme from the former soloist, or do you play the melody of the rhythm?

Eric: All of that. If the last soloist is hip, I come out of that. Terence has a saying that Art Blakey used: "Let the punishment fit the crime." Let the song say to you what it wants to say. A lot of people run from what the music is really trying to say because they feel uncomfortable playing something they're not used to. You have to learn to be comfortable going with the music. You can't do a bunch of Dennis Chambers licks if the music is mellow.

MD: Who has given you the most freedom?

Eric: Ravi Coltrane, who was unlike McCoy Tyner. McCoy knows exactly what he wants. That situation wasn't as free as I had hoped it would be. It *was* magical, though. His trio is a rumbling ball that keeps growing. He wants you to follow him exactly and play the accents in unison. It's about being of one mind.

MD: You were Betty Carter's last drummer. What did she instill in you?

Eric: She would orchestrate the band from the vocal position. She would let me know when to come down and when to come up. She molded me to be the best accompanist for her. And she loved to interact with the drums.

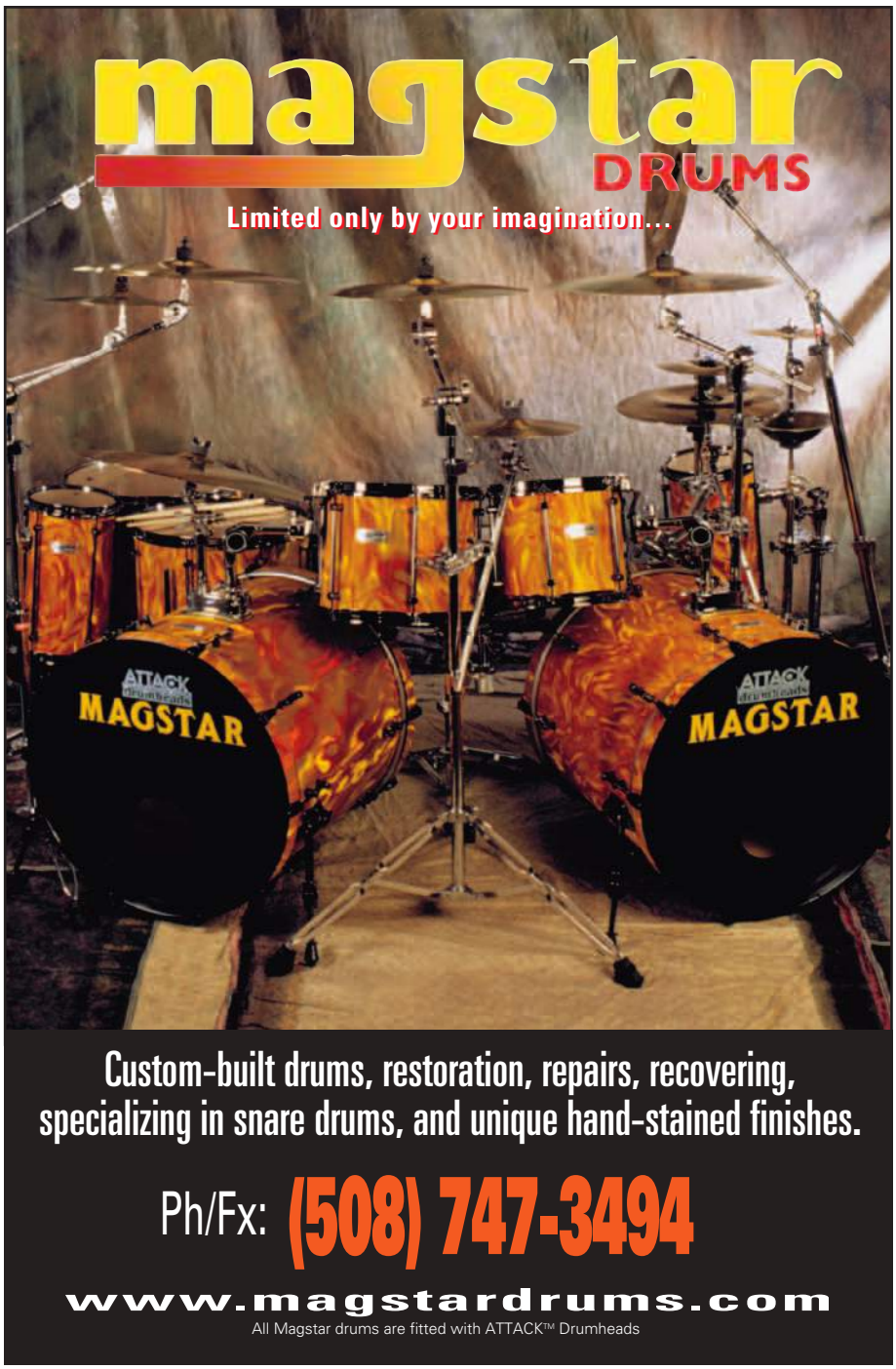
Before I was with Betty I was a one-volume, one-dimensional drummer. She opened my eyes to playing softly with intensity and taught me how to have control of the instrument. I used really dry cymbals in her band, and she loved them. Everyone said she would hate them, but she was very supportive. Kenny Garrett and Terence Blanchard don't like dry cymbals at all.

MD: Why do you use them?

Eric: Because they help the articulation when you swing the whole set. You can't gloss over the rhythm with dry cymbals. They give you less leeway.

MD: You have excellent technique. Did you study books like *Stick Control*?

Eric: Yes, but I practiced them on pillows. To build up the muscles I would play till my arms burned. It helps you to move around the drums really fast. I like to practice sin-



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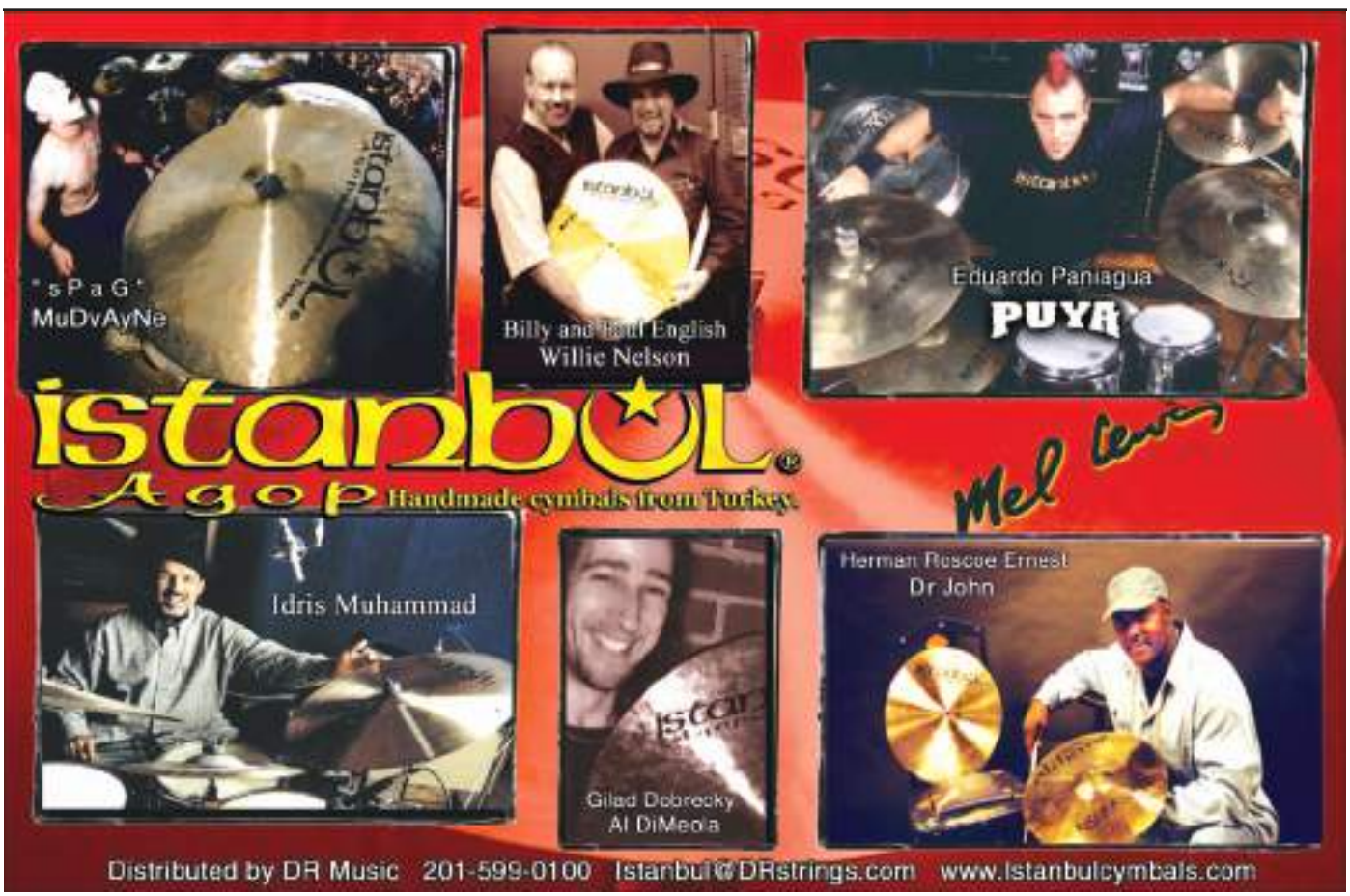
I always like to take the audience on a journey in my solos, developing the solo from the basics to playing the singles as fast as I can so that it roars. It's a moving experience for me, and I want the audience to feel that.

MD: You've recorded a lot of albums in the last few years. What's your approach in the studio?

Eric: I want to be comfortable. I work with the engineer to get a good sound. It's imperative to get the headphone balance right. I put some drums in my headphones to approach the balance that the musicians hear. It helps me to be more sensitive.

MD: When the pressure is on, how do you pay attention to the bottom line and still make an artistic statement?

Eric: It comes with experience. You just have to do it more and more and learn how to bring yourself into a condensed situation. It's about fitting into every situation, even if it's a thirty-second drum solo. You have to know what notes and rhythms really matter vs. playing all the in-between stuff. It's



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about taking people on a spiritual journey.

I've been on a musical journey for only a third of my life. I've mostly been on a spiritual journey due to my childhood. I've been a minister—a diehard Christian—trying to save people to Jesus Christ. It all leads back to God.

MD: You began playing drums when you were in church?

Eric: Yes, from age five to thirteen I only played in church. My mom was the music director at different churches in Houston. That was a big influence, and I had a natural love for the drums. It was a magical thing to feel that spirit and that presence.

MD: When did you get serious about your drumming?

Eric: I was always serious. I had a great instructor named Craig Green. He taught Chris Dave, Kendrick Scott, and Sebastian Whittaker too. I started taking lessons at six to learn the fundamentals. I got serious about jazz when I was fourteen. I really got into Coltrane and Elvin Jones. It just spoke to me.

MD: Being so overweight as a child must have made you sensitive to taunts, but also to the music.

Hidden Track

These are the recordings that Harland says best represent his playing.

Artist	Recording
Mark Shim	Turbulent Flow
Greg Tardy	The Hidden Light
Terence Blanchard	Wandering Moon
Aaron Goldberg	Unfolding
Jason Moran	Human Emotion (soundtrack)
Ravi Coltrane	From The Round Box
Stefon Harris	BlackActionFigure

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration.

Artist	Recording	Drummer
John Coltrane	A Love Supreme	Elvin Jones
Miles Davis Quartet	Live At The Plugged Nickel	Tony Williams
Chick Corea	3 Quartets	Steve Gadd
John McLaughlin	The Heart Of Things	Dennis Chambers
John Scofield	Blue Magic	Dennis Chambers

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Eric: Exactly. The drums were an outlet and a way to express myself, because I was never assertive enough to say what was on my mind. The drums were the only place where I felt comfortable enough to be myself.

MD: What furthered your growth on the drums?

Eric: Wynton Marsalis did a clinic at my high school in Houston in 1994. He loved my playing so much that he helped me get a full scholarship to the Manhattan School of Music, which is where I went from '94 to '96. Coming out of the High School of Performing Arts in Houston, I went into Manhattan at a sophomore level. It was great.

MD: What was your first recording?

Eric: After doing gigs at Smalls, I recorded with Rodney Jones. He helped me to gain a different perspective. I did *X Field*, where I met Greg Osby. We had so much fun. Osby led to Betty Carter, which led to Terence Blanchard. It's a chain reaction. I worked with Stefon Harris, Jason Moran, and Joe Henderson. I joined Terence at the end of '98, and I went with Joshua Redman for a while.

MD: Had you played a lot of jazz in Houston?

Eric: Yes. I played jazz from middle school on.

MD: How did your drumming change when you hit New York?

Eric: Ollie Jackson dominated the scene at Smalls when I came to town, so I looked at what everyone loved about his drumming and incorporated it into my playing. I just stole bits and pieces, like his independence. I was also into Kareem Riggins, who is very anchored in bop. He knows how to let space be the time. And I met Jeff Watts, who I really admired, and Ralph Peterson.

MD: But there must have been greater demands placed upon you by the leaders you were working with than those in Houston.

Eric: I didn't get many demands until I got into Terence's band. Before that, leaders saw that I was reaching and they wanted to help me. They never critiqued me or gave me a hard time. They just kept motivating me.

MD: And that was true of Joe Henderson? Working with him had to be nerve-racking.

Eric: Oh yeah, but the coolest thing about Joe is that he would just say, "Play what you feel." With the old cats, you wouldn't be on the bandstand if you weren't giving them what they wanted. The cats today try to mold you into what *they* want. With Joe, if you played with him a couple nights and didn't get it together, he would just fire you. The musicians have become more compassionate about feelings, but less compassionate about the music. But the old cats didn't care about your feelings. The music had to be right.

MD: What challenges do you see for yourself?

Eric: Being more musical and assertive in playing what's necessary, and letting go of what's not necessary. It's about continuing to find the right balance and make more music. What is *most* challenging is being me. I think I'm ready now to start my own band, with my own musical direction. A lot of my music is about praise and worship.

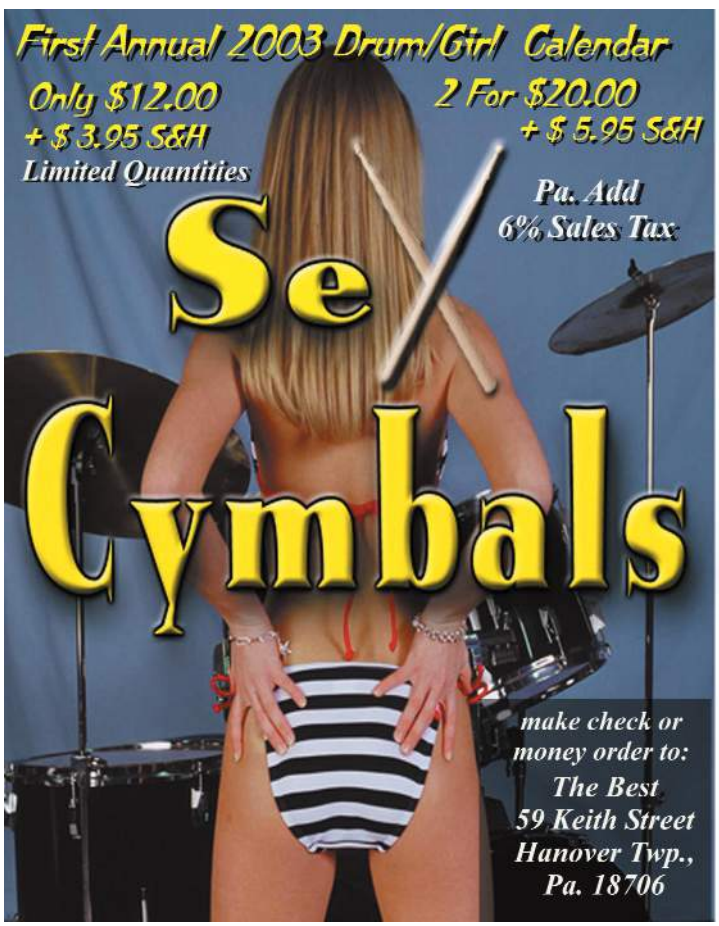
MD: What do you practice now?

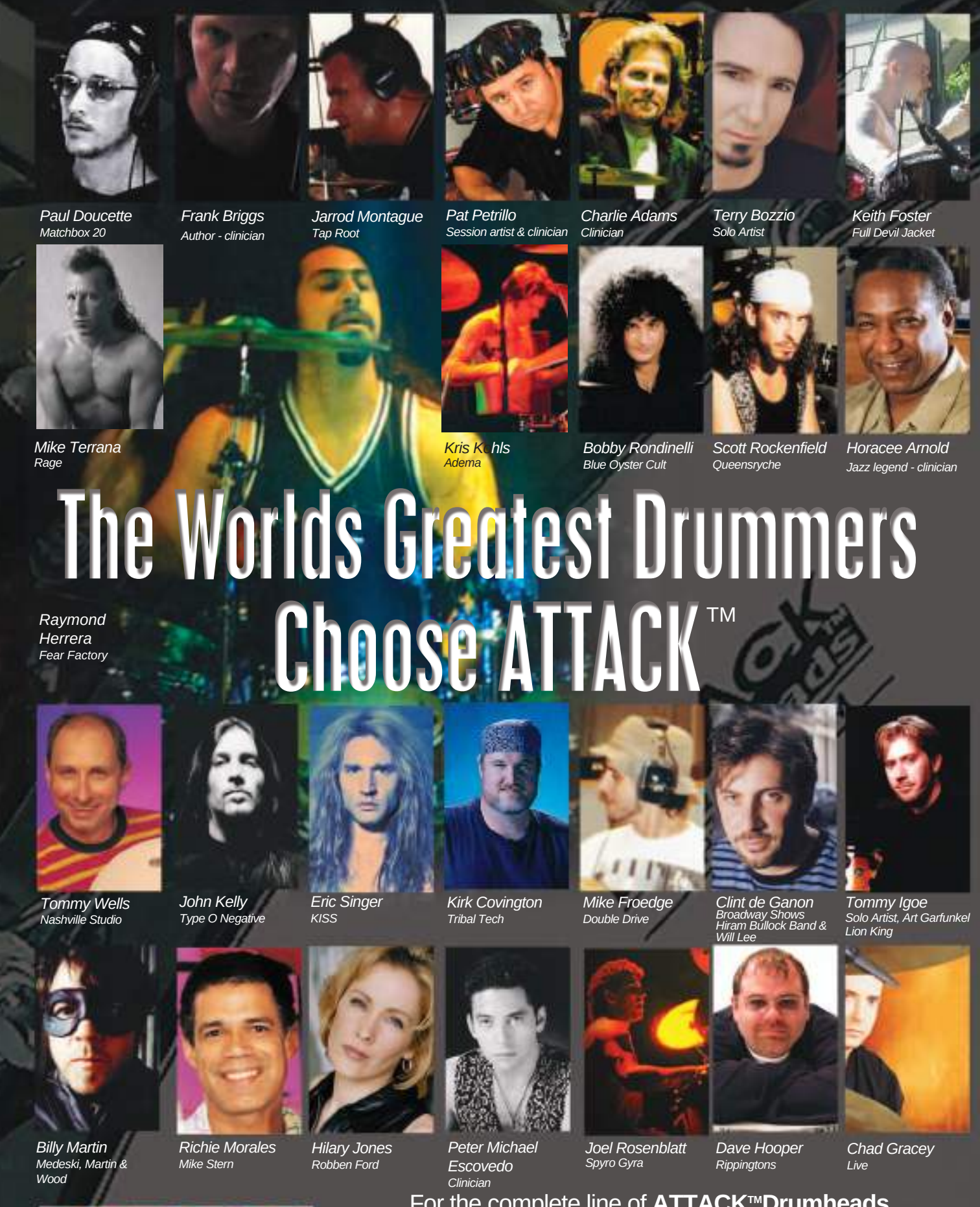
Eric: I constantly work on my time. I stay conscious of time in all situations. Good time is wonderful—it just flows. It's a positive thing that has to be nurtured. I love it.

MD: What do you say to young drummers who want to come to New York?

Eric: Be ready for anything. And love the music. I also believe in following the voice of God. I have faith. It's beautiful when you can trust it and let it guide you. You can't deny God. I hope young drummers recognize that.

If drummers love the music, then coming to New York will be the most beautiful experience they'll ever have. But if they love money, it could be the worst. Make sure your priorities and your morals are in the right place. If that's happening, you can expect great things.





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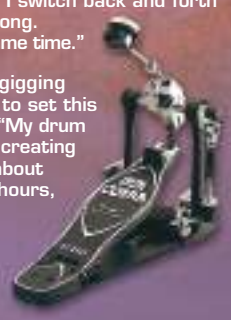
MIKE PORTNOY & THE SIAMESE MONSTER

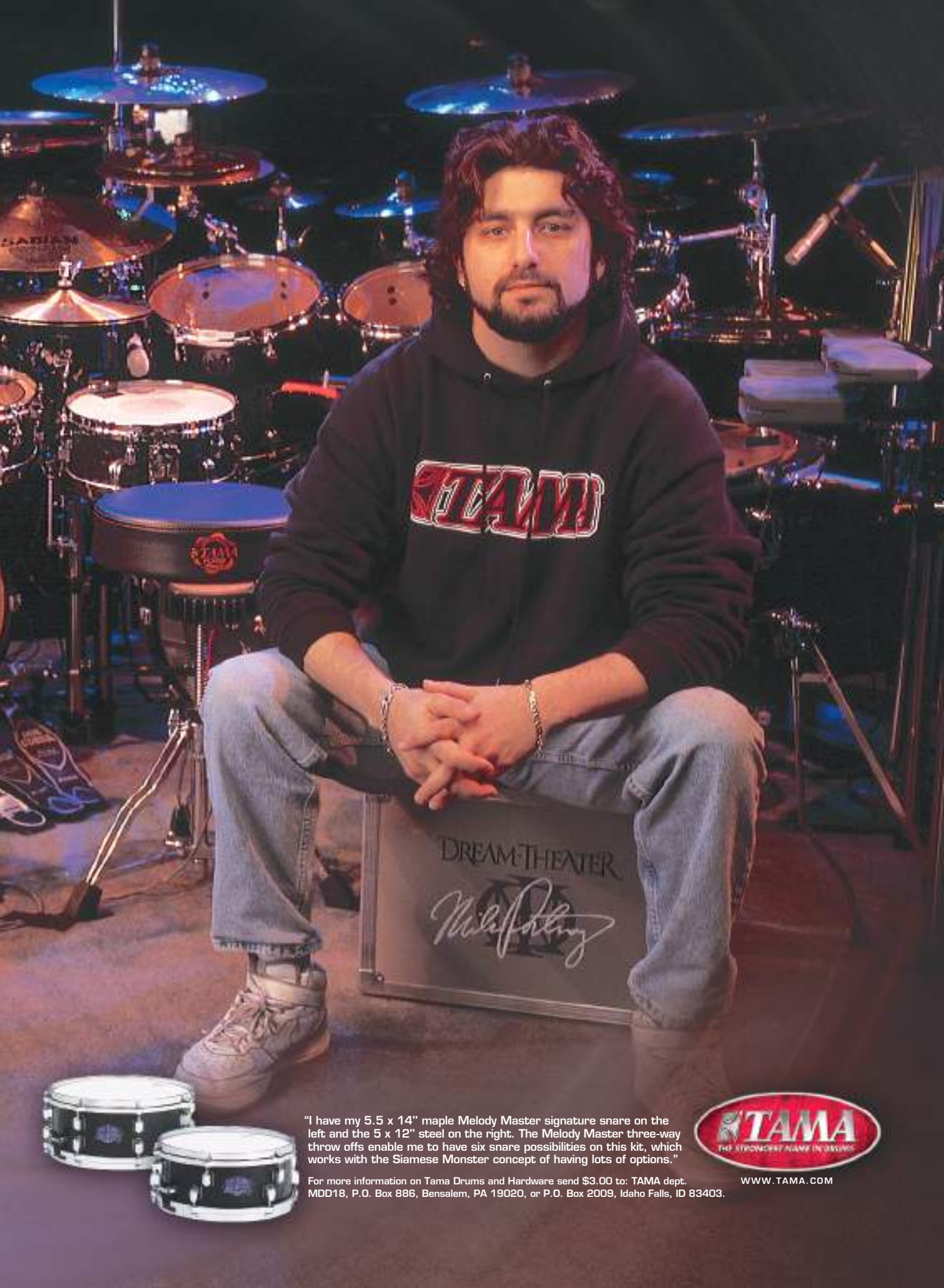
Words like "massive," "gargantuan" and even "infinite" are simply too puny to describe Mike Portnoy's new Starclassic Maple kit. Fortunately, Mike has a more apt description: "I call it the 'Siamese Monster' and that's exactly what it is, a two headed beast. I couldn't decide if I wanted a big *Dream Theater-type* kit or a small kit, which I had really come to enjoy with my side projects, *TransAtlantic* and *Liquid Tension Experiment*. But I knew I really couldn't reduce the size of my kit for *Dream Theater* just because *Dream Theater* is so over the top. So I said, why not have both? And that's what we ended up doing. The Siamese Monster is actually two kits in one. It's the kit of my dreams.

"On the right side is my 'experimental kit,' which features completely untraditional elements: a 20" kick with a 12" snare, toms which are running backward, a Gong Bass Drum instead of a floor tom, a ride cymbal on the left, a triple hi-hat on the right and an 8" hi-hat on the right. On the left side is the Dream Theater-style double bass kit – although for the first time I'm using 22" kicks instead of 24's. I find the 22's have more punch and control and help bring down the height of the kit. There's also one other difference. After doing a lot of Tama clinics, I fell in love with the Iron Cobra pedals, so I decided to come back full time to the Tama pedal department.

"A lot of people say, how could you possibly play this – three kick drums, two snares, and four hi-hats? But I'm not playing the entire kit at once. That's the purpose of the two thrones. I switch back and forth from song to song or even within the same song. Or I can even play with another person at the same time."

We've got to ask what's probably on every gigging drummer's mind: how long does it take Mike to set this behemoth up? "I haven't a clue," laughs Mike. "My drum tech, Jose Baraquio, was an integral part of creating this kit with me. He can set this thing up in about 45 minutes now. It would take me about six hours, maybe more. If I had to set this thing up by myself, I'd play a four piece kit."





"I have my 5.5 x 14" maple Melody Master signature snare on the left and the 5 x 12" steel on the right. The Melody Master three-way throw offs enable me to have six snare possibilities on this kit, which works with the Siamese Monster concept of having lots of options."

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Max Roach

"Jodi's Cha Cha"

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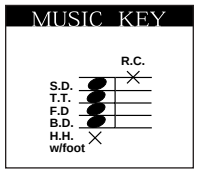
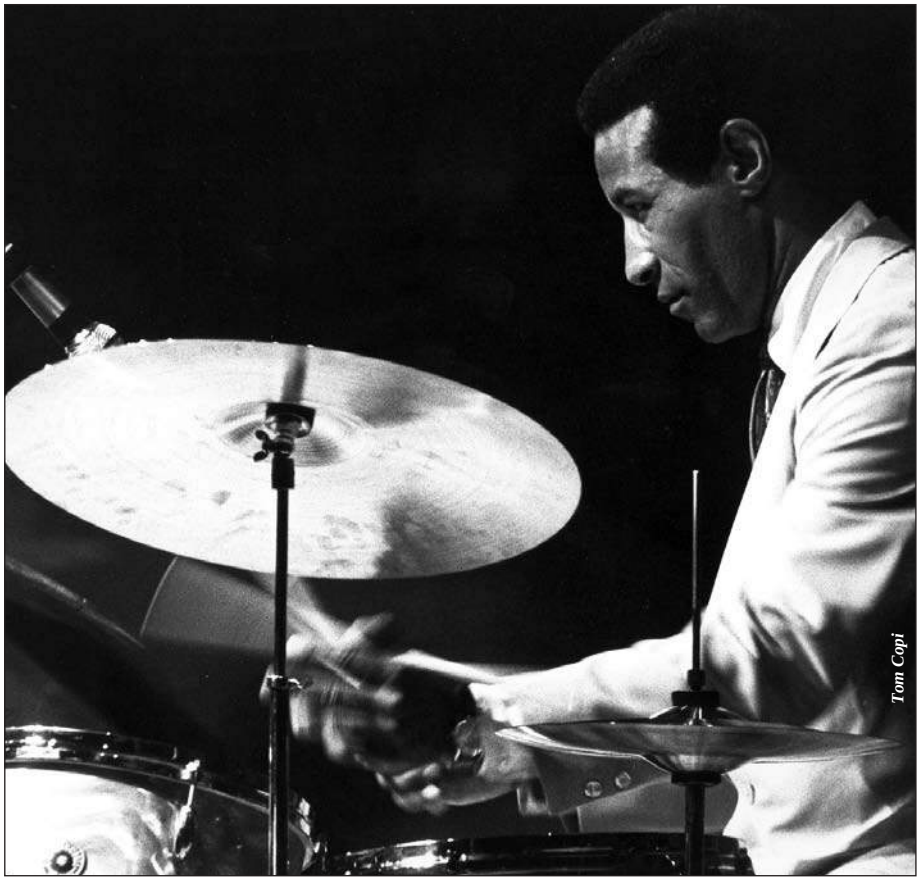
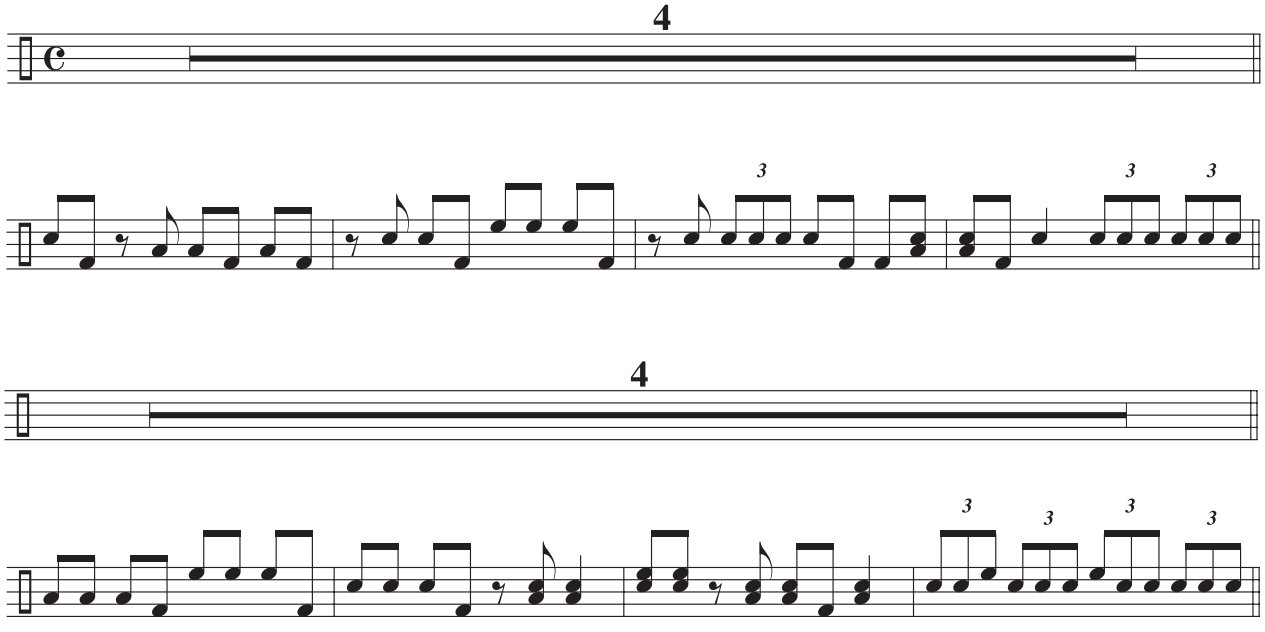
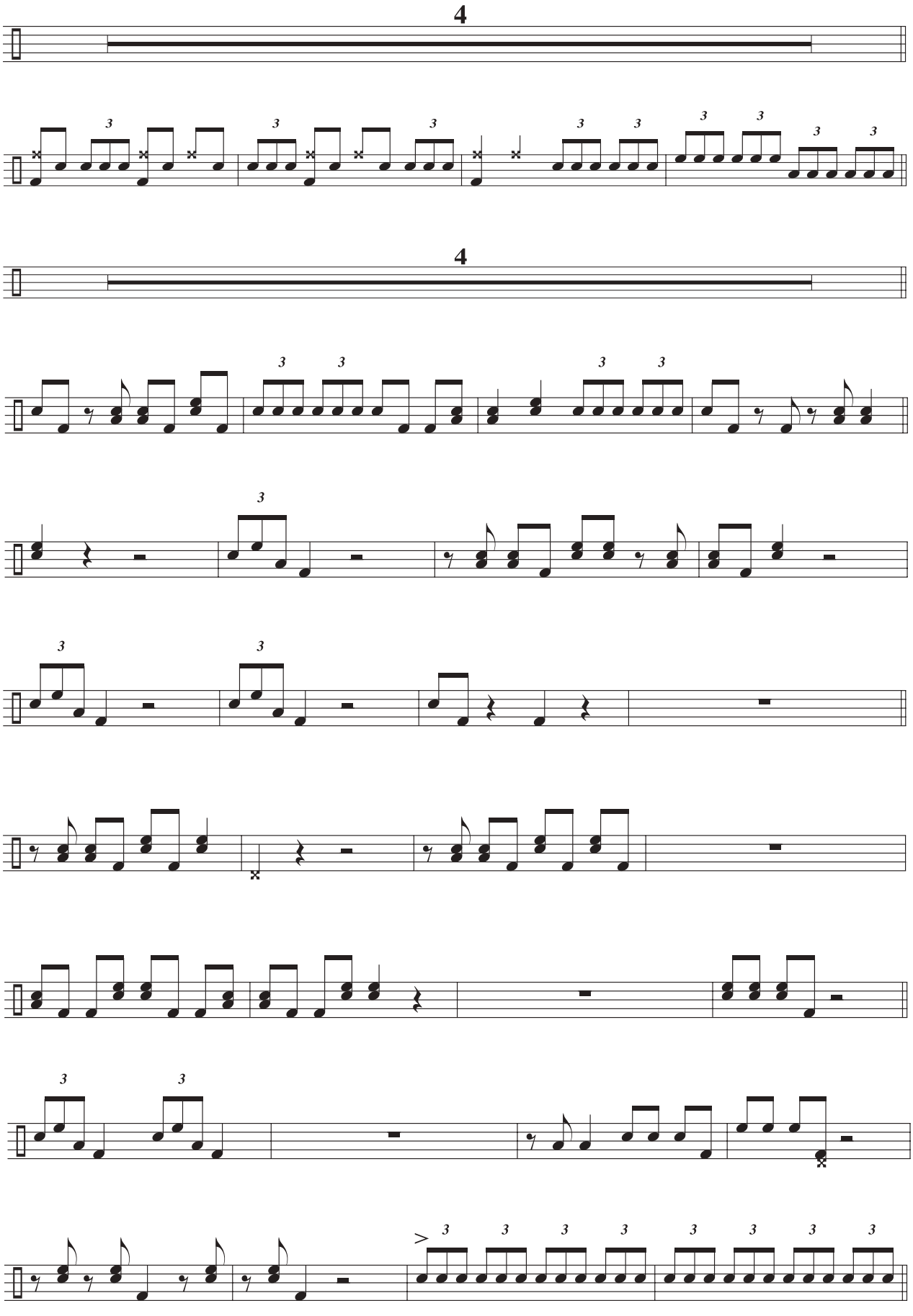


This month's *Drum Soloist* features the always-amazing Max Roach, from his 1958 album *Deeds Not Words*. Although the tempo of this solo is very fast, it's still a good one to check out because it shows how Max uses rests to create musical phrases with space, rather than filling up every bar with notes. After the "fours," the solo is played over a walking bass line. Note how, during this section, Max *doesn't* feather the bass drum or play beats 2 and 4 on his hi-hat, two common techniques in jazz drum soloing.



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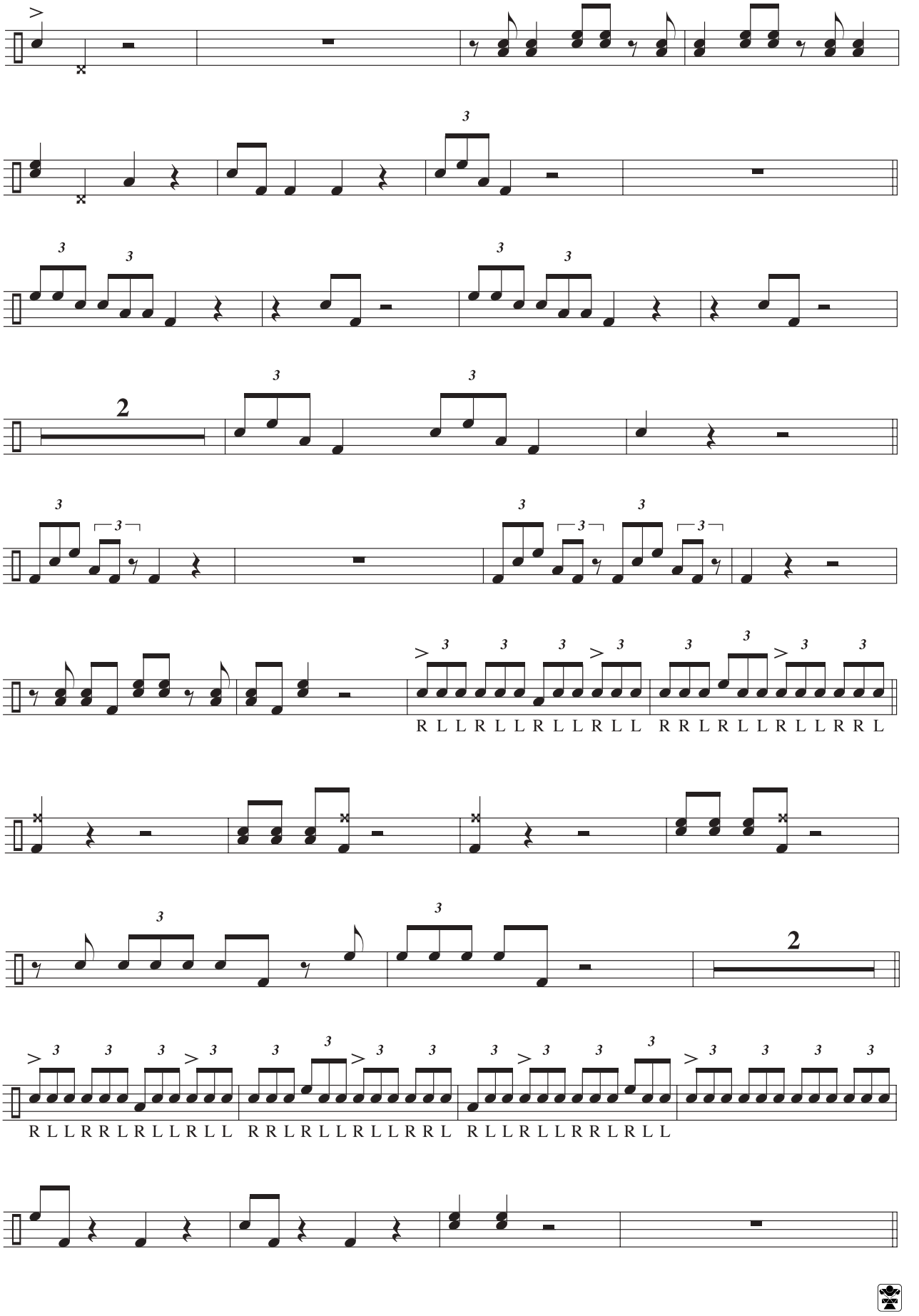
Max Roach Solo

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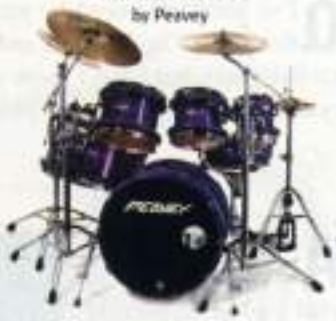

It's no secret that the legendary Don Brewer has an influential sound. The opening of "We're An American Band" is standard reference for most drummers. In searching for a kit to complement his distinctive style, he knew one thing – he wanted it to be extraordinary. That's why he plays RadialPro drums, made in the USA by Peavey. Our patented radial bridge design removes tuning and mounting hardware stresses from the drum's shell. That allows them to be extremely thin, so they can resonate freely like the soundboard on a violin. So they not only look distinctive, they also have a deep, resonant tone that sets them apart from conventional drums. It's exactly the kind of edge Don was looking for.

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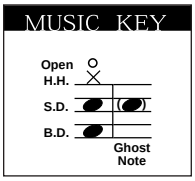
Songo

The "Jazz" Of Cuban Drumming

by Maria Martinez



The story of the songo rhythm began with Juan Formell, bass player and leader of the popular Cuban group Los Van Van. Formell was the first to conceptualize the songo rhythmic style. The founding drummer of Los Van Van, Blas Egues, played with the group for only a few months. When Blas departed from the group in 1970, the equipment he left behind included a basic five-piece drumset, but no cymbals or hi-hat. Instead the kit had a large piece of bamboo (cana brava) mounted on a stand. Drummer Jose Luis Quintana, better known by the nickname "Changuito," joined the band and began to develop the songo rhythm using this basic drumkit.

During the twenty-five years that Changuito played with Los Van Van, the songo rhythm went through many transformations. The rhythm that most drummers play today started out as a variation of the songo rhythm that was only played during a particular section of a song. Changuito gave that groove the nickname *bota*, which means boot.

Songo Lesson

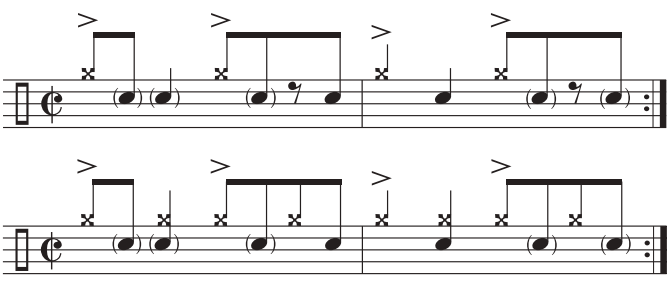
It's important to realize that the songo style of drumming is more of a concept than one particular beat. Songo is a blend of folkloric and contemporary Cuban styles with elements of funk and jazz. In many ways, songo is the jazz of Cuban drumming.

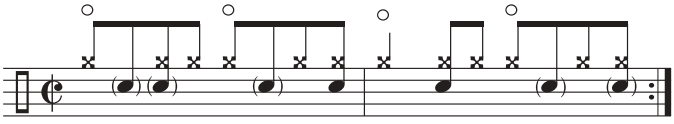
The songo ostinatos in this article are popular grooves often played in the Latin-jazz style of music. The ostinatos will help you coordinate the suggested songo grooves against the two-bar bass drum phrases. The ostinatos are written in 3/2 rumba clave, but they can also be played in 2/3 by starting on the second bar. Although the clave rhythm is not played in this particular drumset example, it's important to always be aware of the clave while playing the songo style.

Begin by practicing one of the ostinatos written below until you're comfortable playing it. To accomplish the correct feel, play the ghost notes on the snare drum as softly as possible.

Songo Ostinatos

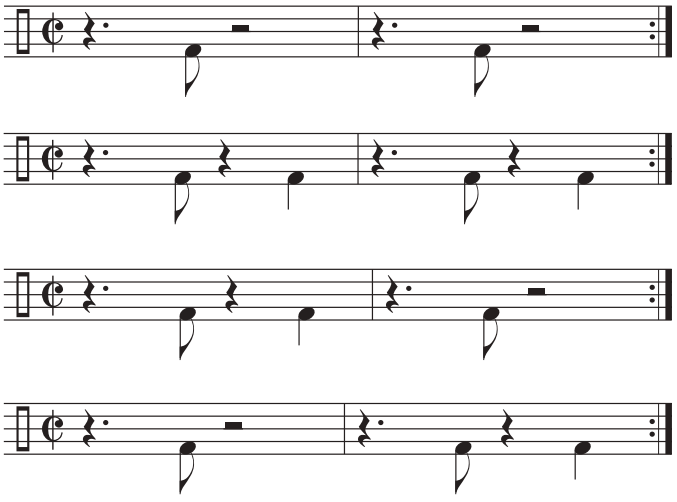
3/2 Rumba Clave





Bass Drum Variations

The following patterns are bass drum variations that can be played with the three songo ostinatos in the previous examples. Once you're comfortable playing the songo ostinato, combine the suggested bass drum phrases written below. Play each combined songo ostinato with the bass drum variations in 3/2 (as written). Then try playing the ostinato in 2/3 (starting on the second bar) and combining the bass drum variations.



Because there are so many ways to play and interpret the songo rhythmic style, I encourage you to listen to and analyze the music as much as possible. Los Van Van, Batacumbele, Michel Camilo, Paquito D'Rivera, Ruben Blades, and Gonzalo Rubalcaba are just a few artists that have recorded the songo style. Drummers who are masters at songo include Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Ignacio Berroa, Robbie Ameen, Alex Acuña, Jimmy Branley, Jose Martinez, and Julio Barreto.

The examples in this lesson are excerpts from Maria Martinez' Afro-Cuban Coordination For Drumset *book/CD package, published by Hal Leonard. (Used with permission.) Martinez has performed with Barry White, El Chicano, Rita Coolidge, Nel Carter, Angela Bofill, and many others. She is also an active clinician and educator.*

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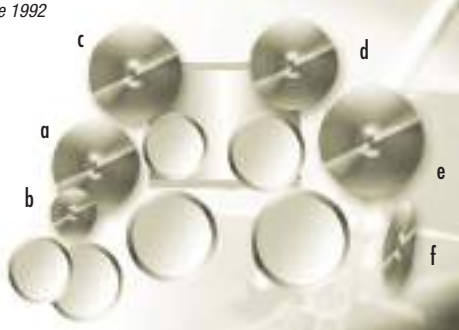

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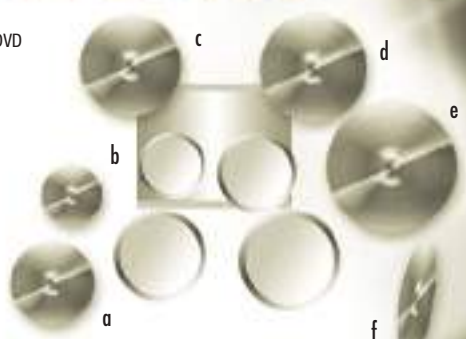

a – 14" Signature Heavy Hi-Hat
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c – 17" Signature Full Crash
d – 18" Signature Full Crash
e – 22" Signature Dry Heavy Ride (custom)
e – 20" 2002 Novo China

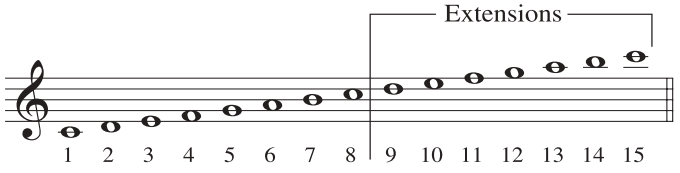
Understanding The Language Of Music

Part 12: Chord Extensions

by Ron Spagnardi

The four notes that make up a 7th chord (root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th) aren't the *only* notes that sound good when played with that chord. Chord extensions are notes that are stacked above the 7th for additional variety and color, and are predominant in many standards and jazz harmonies.

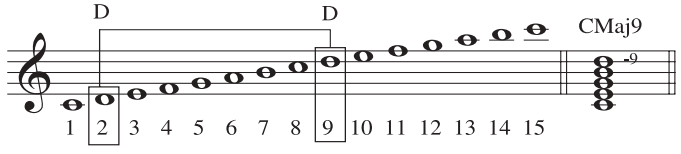
Let's begin by examining the C scale below. Notice the scale degrees written beneath each note (1–15). Those notes that fall *above* the octave (9–15) are the chord extensions.



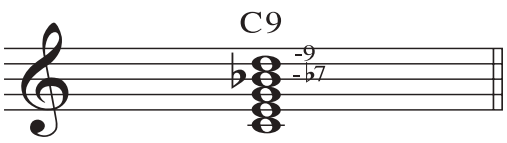
The most commonly used extensions are the 9th, 11th, and 13th. Let's look at each one individually.

The 9th

Notice that the 9th degree of the C scale (D) is actually the same as the 2nd degree, only one octave higher. The symbol for the chord shown below is CMaj9. Chords are generally named by the highest extension in the voicing, in this case the 9th.

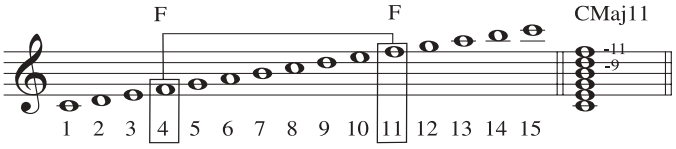


The symbol C9 indicates that the 9th is added to a *dominant 7th chord* with its lowered 7th (root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, 9th).



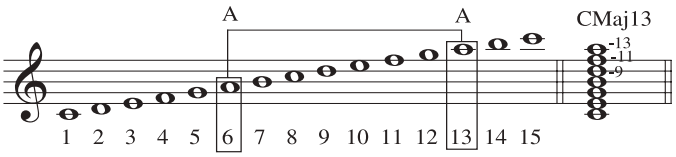
The 11th

Another commonly used extension is the 11th degree of the scale. Note that in the key of C, the 11th (F) is the same as the 4th degree, one octave higher. Also notice that the 9th is included in the chord, unless it's omitted or altered in the chord symbol. (We'll learn more about altered extensions next month.)



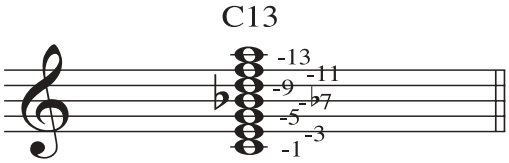
The 13th

In the key of C, the 13th (A) is the same as the 6th degree of the scale, one octave higher. The symbol for a major 13th chord is CMaj13. Here again, the 9th and 11th are included unless they're omitted or altered in the chord symbol.



Extensions Quick And Easy

An easy way to locate all three extensions (9th, 11th, and 13th) of any chord is to build a minor triad on the 9th degree of the scale. For example, a C dominant 7th (C, E, G, B♭) in the left hand, with a D minor triad (D, F, A) stacked above it in the right hand, gives you all of the notes of a C13 chord. Try this on your keyboard.



The chart below contains the dominant 7th chords in every key and their extensions. Notice how a minor triad built on the 9th degree produces the 9th, 11th, and 13th extension.

		(minor triad)		
Chord	**Dominant 7th**	**9th**	**11th**	**13th**
C13	C E G B♭	D	F	A
G13	G B D F	A	C	E
D13	D F♯ A C	E	G	B
A13	A C♯ E G	B	D	F♯
E13	E G♯ B D	F♯	A	C♯
B13	B D♯ F♯ A	C♯	E	G♯
G♭13	G♭ B♭ D♭ E	A♭	B	E♭
D♭13	D♭ F A♭ B	E♭	G♭	B♭
A♭13	A♭ C E♭ G♭	B♭	D♭	F
E♭13	E♭ G B♭ D♭	F	A♭	C
B♭13	B♭ D F A♭	C	E♭	G
F13	F A C E♭	G	B♭	D

Spend a good portion of this month's studying all the above material. Next month we'll take things one step further and examine extension chords that are altered.

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Strengthening Your Feet

by Rod Morgenstein

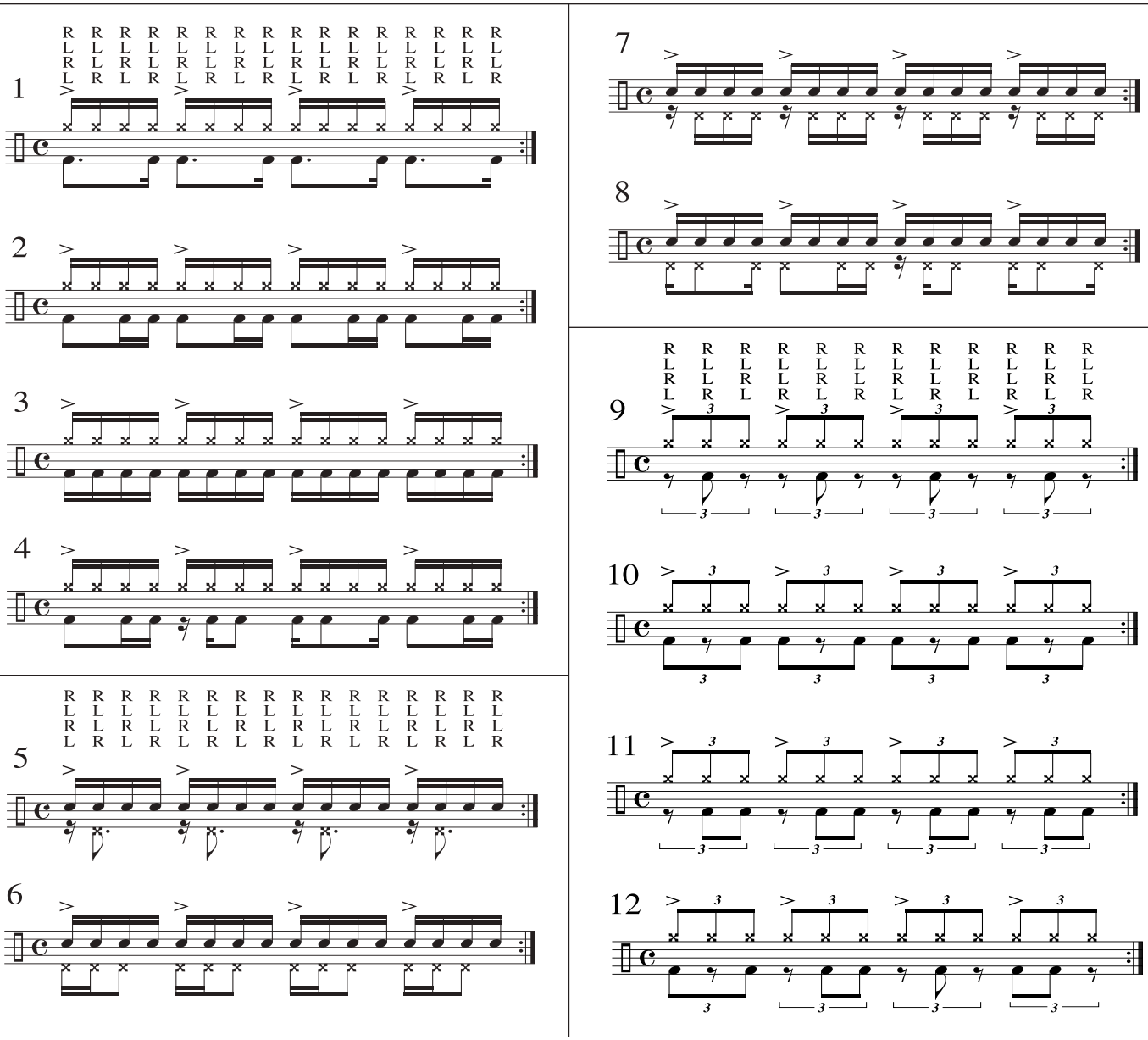
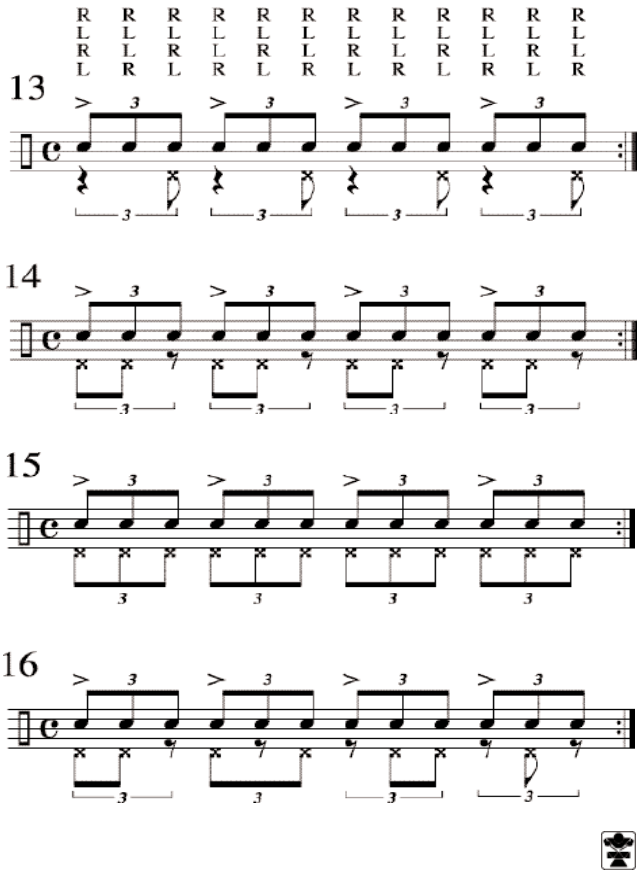
MUSIC KEY

H.H.
S.D.
B.D.
H.H. w/foot

The feet are sorely neglected when compared to their upper-body counterparts, the hands. This month's article focuses on ways to strengthen your feet. These examples will give your feet a good workout. (They can also be added to your warm-up routine.)

Each of the following examples should be played with the four accompanying hand patterns listed. Pick a hand pattern, play the exercise several times through to establish continuity and flow, and then move on to the next hand pattern. (By the way, accenting the downbeat of each quarter note will help make the bass drum/hi-hat notes sound equal in volume and intensity.)

These examples will also help your hands. The "LLLL" hand pattern will build strength in your weaker hand, and the "LRLR" hand pattern will increase coordination. Examples 1–8 are 16th-note-based patterns, and examples 9–16 involve 8th-note triplets.



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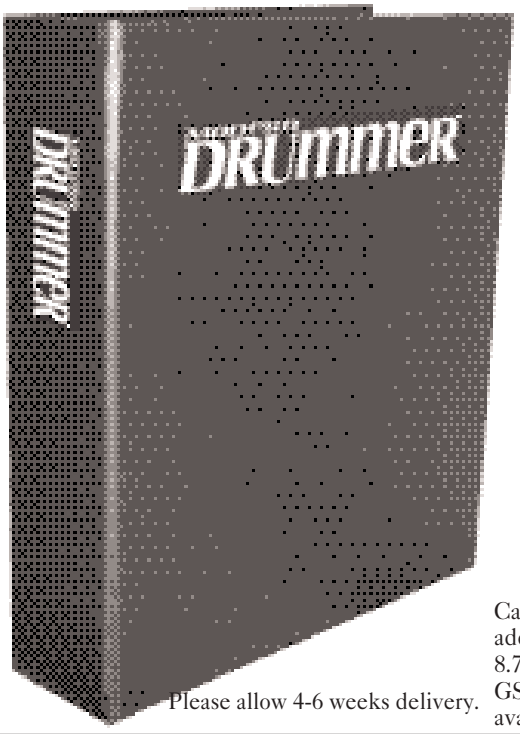

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Feathering The Bass Drum

The Power Of Subtlety

by Phillip Smith

"Four to the bar," "four on the floor," or "feathering": These are the most common terms used in jazz to describe the act of lightly playing four quarter notes per measure on the bass drum.

Feathering has been used since the emergence of big band in the '30s. Prior to that the bass drum was played heavier and was a more integral sound within the band itself, especially in Dixieland and New Orleans brass band styles, where the imitation of marching drummers was the norm.

Many drummers believe that feathering actually stopped during the bebop years, but that couldn't be further from the truth. With bebop drummers "dropping bombs" on the bass drum, it gave many the impression that feathering had been replaced by constant syncopated bass drum fills. However, close listening to many of the great bebop drummers—Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, Philly Joe Jones, etc.—reveals their mastery of feathering. And before you say that it's an antiquated sound that modern drummers spurn, let me remind you that contemporary drumming greats like Carl Allen, Kenny Washington, and Lewis Nash all feather the bass drum.

Feathering was originally a way to emphasize and add some percussive attack to the acoustic bassist's quarter-note walking line. However, it also does several specific things for the drummer and the rest of the band. First, it lays down a solid foundation for the entire group. It also adds a layer of bottom end to the drummer's individual sound. In a normal swing groove, the basic instruments are all high-pitched (cymbals, hi-hats, and snare). The addition of some bass in the mix lends stability to the groove.

Feathering also directly affects how a drummer plays. The hands naturally play differently over the top of a constant quarter-note bass pattern than they do without that beat. The feathering motion provides a solid reference that allows the hands to play very syncopated rhythms against it. Also, many drummers find that without feathering they feel obligated to play more syncopated bass drum and snare drum ideas to fill spaces.

Technique

One of the most important factors in achieving the correct feathering volume and sound is proper pedal technique. Most drummers who use the technique we're about to describe play with a felt beater on a medium to loosely tensioned pedal. In addition, they generally tune their bass higher and more open (sometimes totally open or with just a felt strip) than rock drummers do.

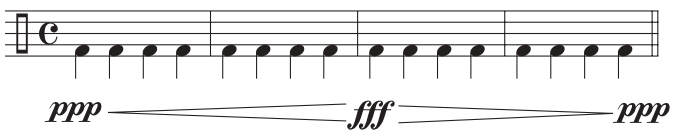
Begin with the heel-down style of playing. Some drummers play heel-up style very well. But most find it more relaxing and easier with their foot resting the entire time. The heel-down technique also produces a more legato, resonant sound, which is generally desired for this style.

Keep your leg very relaxed, much like you might when you're dangling your legs off a boat dock. Your foot should be comfortable on the pedal, with your toes close to the strap or chain. (This might require your removing a toe stop from the footboard.) This increases control over the small movements you're about to make.

Now allow the weight of your leg and perhaps a bit of foot pressure to move the beater to about one or two inches from the head. Strive to keep that distance between the head and beater between strokes. The space should only widen before you make accented strokes.

The feathering stroke can be compared to lightly tapping your foot on the floor. And don't worry, plenty of sound will be generated from the small ankle movements. Allow the beater to rebound off the head. The finishing position should be the same as the starting position. Plenty of practice will yield the results you desire.

Practice Tips

A good exercise to test your new technique and improve your control of the pedal is to play quarter notes spanning the dynamic spectrum. The following four-bar example can be elongated to eight, sixteen, twenty-four, thirty-two, or as many measures as you wish. Also, different note values can be used in place of quarters. Try 8ths, 16ths, 8th-note triplets, and 16th-note triplets.

A great practice routine is to feather while playing exercises in Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*. Play the entire first half of the book with four on the floor. Also try feathering with any of the systems created for use with Ted Reed's book *Syncopation*. There are many other books available that will give you plenty of practice on feathering. With a little creativity you can develop your own system of practice in no time.

After a while, get your head out of the books and put some of your new knowledge to work with recorded music. There are numerous trio recordings available that do not feature drummers, the most common configuration being piano, bass, and guitar. Many of these recordings also feature legendary bass players such as Ray Brown, Ron Carter, and Christian McBride. "Playing" with the masters is a great way to perfect your time and sound.

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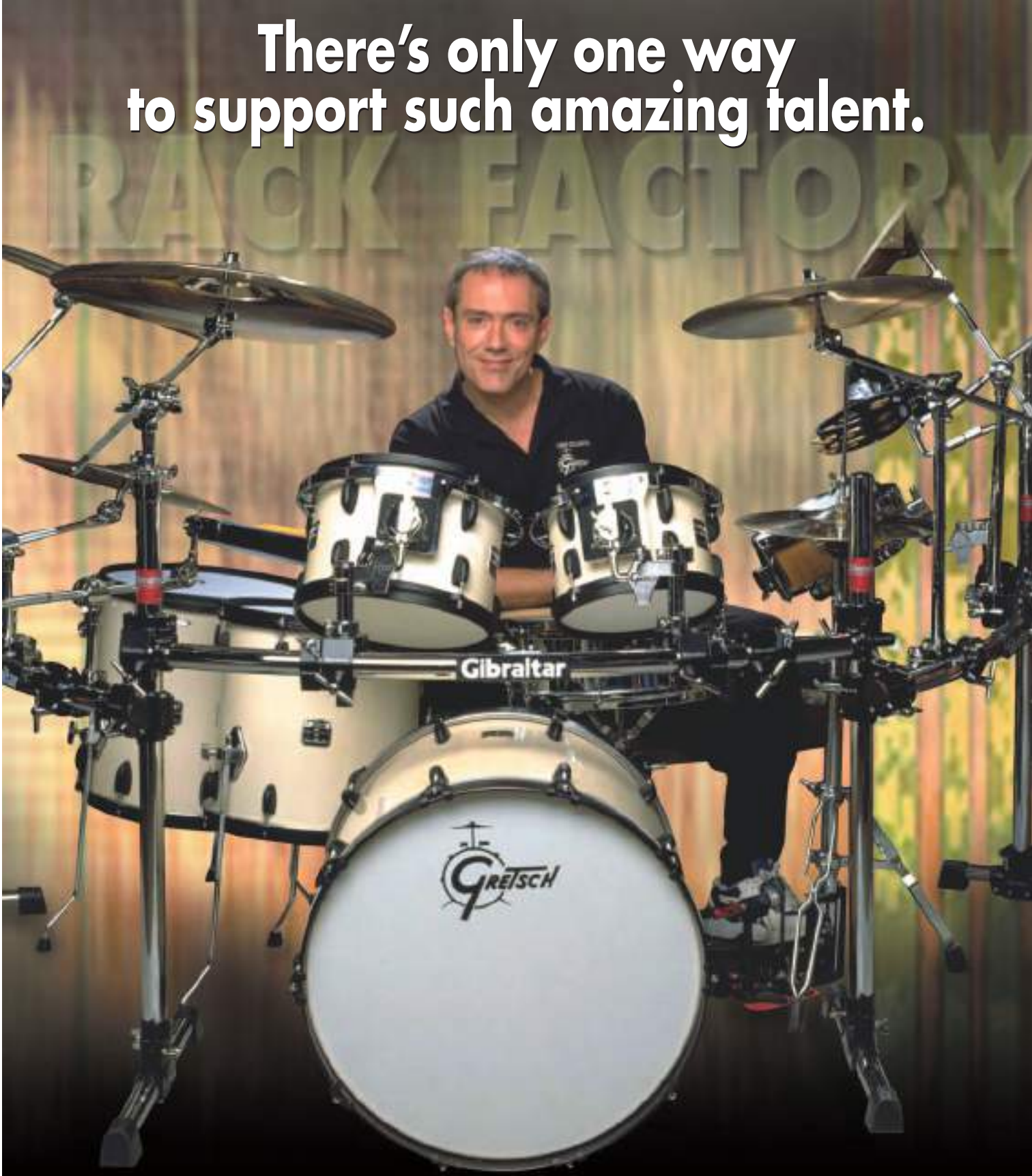

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Lastly, make sure you spend some time playing brushes. Playing with sticks all the time can cover up inconsistencies. Also, using brushes can challenge your technique further. Play different brush patterns at varying tempos and see how it affects your bass drum.

Sound & Application

If you're ever in a playing situation where someone turns to you and tells you to stop playing the bass drum, you're probably playing it too loudly. The old saying "felt but not heard" is never truer than in this sense. The feathering technique should never be heard as a separate rhythm riding above the volume of the band. However, it should be noticed when it's *removed* from the foundation of the group.

I've consciously experimented with stopping the bass drum during playing situations to see what effect it might have on the music and my fellow players. In every encounter the entire group noticed that something seemed to have gone wrong. One bandmember put it succinctly by saying it felt like the bottom had dropped out of the group.

Practice, practice, and then practice this some more. Feathering is foreign and difficult to master for most, but mastering the technique is extremely rewarding and will add a tremendous amount of depth to your playing. In time, feathering will become as natural as the jazz ride pattern or the hi-hat on 2 and 4. Plus, who knows, maybe your bandmembers will notice a whole new feel and depth to your playing. Never underestimate the power of subtlety.

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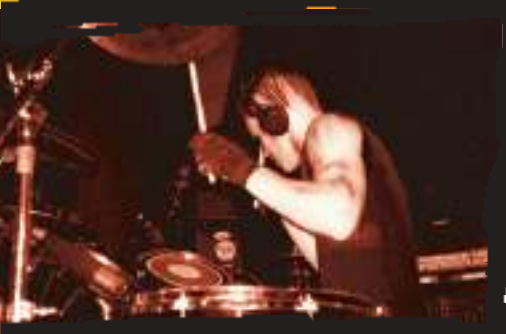

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Drumming & Singing

Double Skills Make You Doubly Valuable

by Stephan S. Nigohosian

Think of a professional drummer/percussionist who can sing and drum at the same time, and names like Phil Collins, Levon Helm, and Don Henley usually come to mind. And though they may be less visible, there are countless other working drummers and percussionists who tour the circuit of clubs and small venues, singing as they pound the skins. But how can one master the art of singing and drumming, and learn the correct way from the start? And how can drummers who already simultaneously sing and play further improve upon their skills?

From beginner to professional, a drummer or percussionist who can handle several tasks for the band is obviously of great value to the group. Therefore, a person capable of singing and drumming at the same time not only expands the band's sound, but can also save it money and give each member a bigger piece of the pie. For instance, when a band wants to add another lead or background vocal to their music, a drummer who can sing eliminates the need for an additional vocalist. Furthermore, once that person becomes a member of the band, his or her contribution will be viewed as vital to its livelihood and identity. After all, an extra singing voice allows the band to expand its repertoire of cover songs and original music.

The Band's Levon Helm: Don't get caught up in the counting.

Finding A Guide

Those who have attempted to sing and drum at the same time know that it requires concentration, coordination, vocal discipline, and, of course, plenty of practice. Unfortunately, drummers are faced with even more challenges than their singing bandmates, due to factors associated with singing from behind a drumset. Guitarists and keyboardists can play chords and notes to serve as a "guide" for the vocal melody. The fact that the drumset is not tuned to the specific key of the song makes this practice impossible for the drummer/percussionist. For example, it's a lot easier to remember that a particular lyric is to be sung in the key of "A" over the A chord section of a song than it is to use the crash of a cymbal or the beat of a bass drum as a marker. Furthermore, when practicing alone, keyboardists and guitarists still have the benefit of using the accompaniment of their instrument as a guide. Drummers who practice alone without music must "hear" the song in their heads.

Levon Helm, legendary singer/drummer for The Band, suggests getting relaxed and comfortable enough with the song to allow it to naturally flow. "Sometimes there are spots in certain songs where it's a bit tougher going from a chorus to a verse while you're singing and drumming," he says. "The Band always tried to put sing-along choruses in a lot of our songs, and the gear-shifting between those different sections, combined with having a mouthful to sing, can get a little challenging at times. But if you can just ride it, 'let it go' and don't count it out too strictly, singing while drumming becomes second-nature."

Let's Get Physical

There are also physical obstacles that can make it difficult to simultaneously sing and drum. Since most drummers play while seated, they must pay extra attention to proper posture. When a person sings, the chest cavity acts as an "air reserve" that resonates more easily when the torso is straight. Unfortunately, some drummers have a tendency to lean or stretch while playing, preventing their torsos from being fully extended. The movement of a drummer's limbs while playing, combined with the overall physical nature of drumming, further complicates matters. Fortunately, these are hurdles that can be overcome with education, hard work, and a strong desire to expand as a musician.

William Riley, New York City–based vocal instructor to many of today's most noted professional singers, reveals that there are two main ergonomic issues that drummers must keep in mind when singing and drumming. First, avoid stretching or leaning forward while playing. Second, resist the urge to extend the chin upward while singing. "When a drummer leans to play a floor tom or crash a cymbal," Riley says, "the spine curves forward into a 'C'-shape, resulting in a undesirable collapsing of the upper chest. Setting up the drumkit in a manner that places the striking surfaces well within reach is much more ideal."

Riley also suggests using boom-type microphones, since their flexibility allows for proper positioning and forces the drummer to maintain proper posture while singing. Headset microphones can also be effective if special attention is given to maintaining good posture while wearing them. Once again, correct posture behind the drumset is the key to health-related aspects of singing and drumming.

Anyone who sings regularly must take special care of his or her vocal instrument. Most people are aware that alcohol, caf-

feine, tobacco smoke, and shouting can adversely affect one's voice. But many people *don't* know that whispering can be just as damaging as yelling. Constant throat clearing and coughing, as well as speaking on airplanes where the background noise causes you to raise your voice without realizing it, should also be avoided.

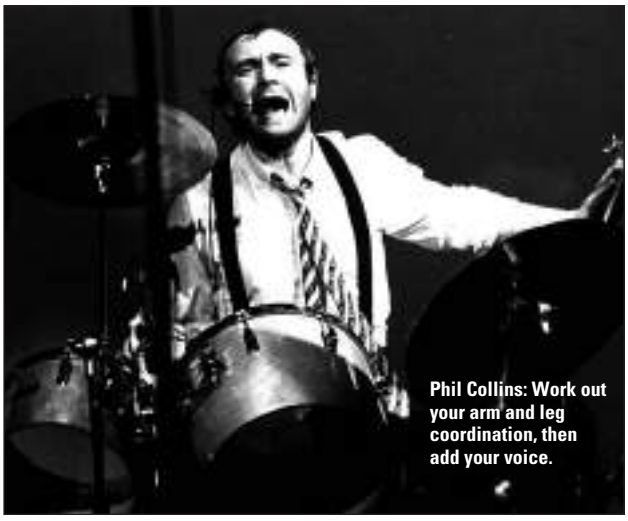
Get Professional Help

Vocal cords are susceptible to damage if subjected to strain or improper movement. In extreme circumstances this can lead to serious, irreparable injury. Therefore, it is advisable to visit a reputable vocal coach in the early stages of learning how to sing and drum, in order to learn to sing properly from the beginning.

There are many affordable vocal coaches who specialize in working with musicians. Compared to the risk of damaging one's voice by not getting proper vocal instruction, the fee most vocal coaches charge is modest.

Dr. Gwen S. Korovin is a New York City–based otolaryngologist, many of whose patients are professional singers and public speakers. "Some people are afraid to see vocal specialists for fear of having their singing style altered," she says. "However, in reality, a coach can teach the singer/drummer how to warm up effectively and actually protect his or her singing voice. By learning the proper way to sing, one can do more with his or her voice, using less effort."

Dr. Korovin also suggests making sure that the voice is allowed to "rest" during performances. Vocally challenging songs should be interspersed with easier songs throughout the set, rather than having several difficult songs scheduled immediately after each other.

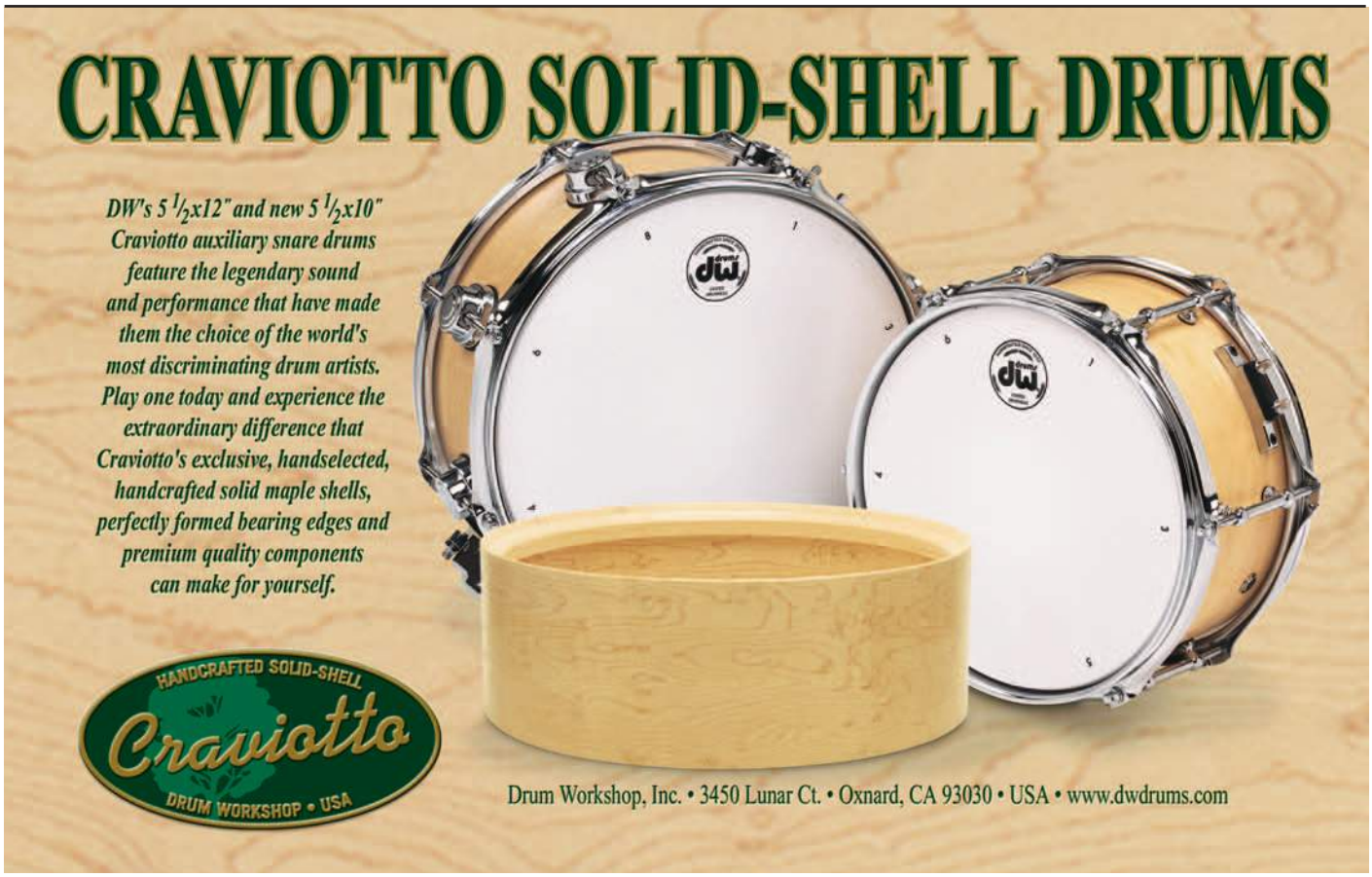


Phil Collins: Work out your arm and leg coordination, then add your voice.

You Still Have To Play

Coordination can also prove to be a challenge for drummers who'd like to be able to sing while playing. Drummers who play *without* singing rarely have to think of the beat they are playing. Even the most complicated linear drumbeats can become second-nature after enough practice. It's important to keep this in mind when introducing singing into the equation.

Remember the first time you tried a polyrhythm, and how much concentration and practice was required to master it? The same technique applies to singing while playing drums. Slowing down the beat and internalizing the vocal lines while singing them will help "link" a specific bass-drum stroke or tom-tom accent with a lyrical point in the song. With enough practice the lyrics and the sticking will become one. Drum fills, particularly intricate ones, will prove to be a challenge at first.



However, by applying the gradual approach, the fill can also become a musical "signpost" for a specific lyrical point in the song. Once a certain degree of comfort is reached, increasing the tempo of the drum parts while singing over them will further bring the song up to its proper speed.

A person capable of singing and drumming at the same time not only expands the band's sound, but can also save it money and give each member a bigger piece of the pie.

For some drummers, singing while drumming comes so naturally that there is not much of a learning curve. "For me, it was really just a matter of getting familiar with the feeling of singing while drumming, and concentrating on my vocal pitch," says Phil Collins. "Working on your coordination, *limb-wise*, is important so you can free up your senses to concentrate on the singing. It may sound hard, but it comes in time." Drummers who would like to hear for themselves just how interesting singing over odd-time signatures can be should listen to some of Collins' earlier work with Genesis.

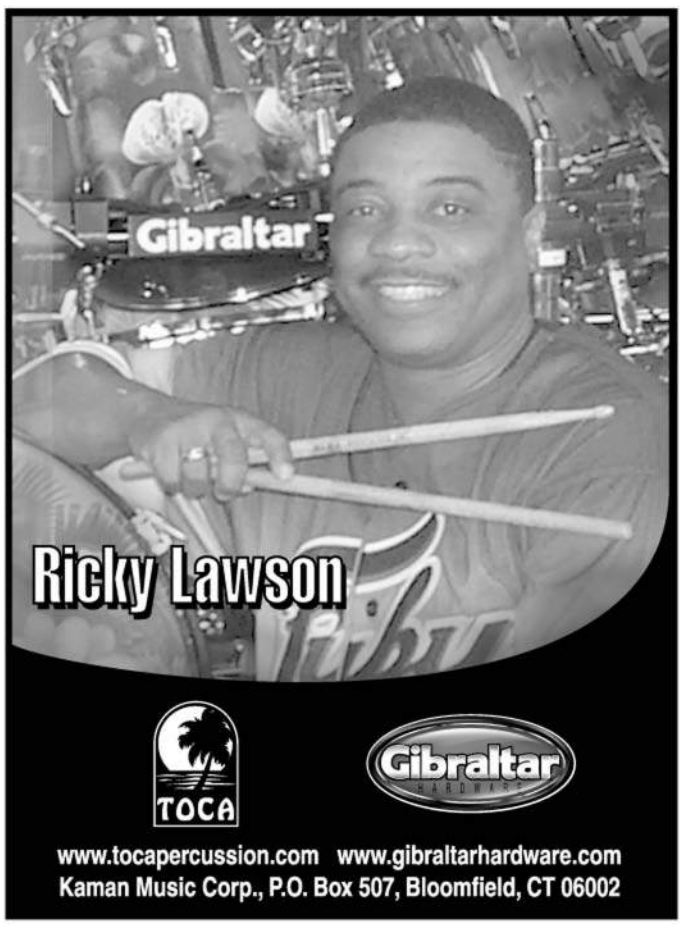
Another helpful hint for fusing singing and drumming parts together is to play and sing along with a recorded version of the song. This technique can be particularly helpful because it allows you to stop and listen to sections where it becomes difficult to sing over the drum part. You can concentrate on listening to the singer of the recorded version to see where the words should fall within the drum part.

Easy Listening

Drummers who play larger club gigs with sophisticated P.A. systems should use the monitor mix to their advantage to make singing easier on their voices. Phil Collins uses in-ear monitors and has the monitor engineer put his voice at a point in the mix where it is enjoyable for him to sing and hear himself. "If you don't have that ideal mix in your monitor," he says, "you'll struggle to hear your vocal over the band and the drums, you'll get hoarse very quickly, and you'll risk injuring your voice."

As with learning any new instrument or drum part, developing the ability to sing while drumming takes patience and practice. Setting small goals, such as singing a simple, repetitive lyric while playing the drum part, can help you to build your confidence and aptitude. In the end, you'll be a better-rounded musician whose contribution is vital to the entire band.

Stephan S. Nigohosian is artist relations & publicity manager for Latin Percussion, as well as an experienced club drummer and freelance contributor to Modern Drummer.



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A Wedding Drummer's Warning

by Mike Brennan

Wedding drummers be forewarned! The following is a list of fines recently issued by the International Alliance Of Wedding Drummers as penalties for the exercise of poor judgement and bad taste before and during gigs. Please use extreme caution. A delegate from the Alliance may be watching!

Offense	Fine
Requesting a ham sandwich from the head waiter upon arrival	**$30**
Asking the bride's father if he'd help you load in	**$50**
Setting up front and center on the bandstand	**$45**
Leaving your trap case on the groom's seat at the head table	**$40**
Wearing black Nikes with a tux	**$50**
Wearing white Nikes with a tux	**$100**
Bringing a 36" bass drum	**$25**
Bringing two 36" bass drums	**$100**
Bringing more than six crash cymbals	**$35**
Forgetting to bring brushes	**$85**
Asking the leader what brushes are	**$185**
Forgetting to bring sticks	**$95**
Forgetting to bring a snare drum	**$175**
Bringing a 46" gong for big endings	**$75**
Bringing two timpani for *really* big endings	**$100**
Bringing a hi-hat that's welded shut	**$250**
Suggesting "Wipe-Out" for the bride and groom's first dance	**$95**
Tuning your snare drum during the benediction	**$175**
Practicing *Stick Control* during the toast	**$125**
Playing an 8th-note rock feel on "Stardust"	**$150**
Pretending to read a drum chart	**$25**
Asking the bass player, "Where are we?" on "Happy Birthday"	**$100**

Offense	Fine
Refusing to play anything in B♭	**$50**
Playing a disco beat on "Take The A Train"	**$200**
Asking to trade fours on "The Bride Cuts The Cake"	**$100**
Playing breaks on "Cute" with 5B sticks	**$50**
Playing breaks on "Cute" with marching cymbals	**$100**
Riding on a China cymbal during "Tenderly"	**$75**
Informing the bride's father that requests are not permitted	**$125**
Telling the bride's father that the chicken dinner looks rancid	**$65**
Hanging out with the bride at the head table during breaks	**$100**
Playing tambourine backbeats on "My Funny Valentine"	**$85**
Asking for an eight-bar solo on "Feelings"	**$100**
Taking an eight-bar solo on "Feelings"	**$200**
Dipping finger in the wedding cake icing	**$50**
Requesting that breaks be extended to one hour and fifteen minutes	**$85**
Counting off "Lil Darlin" at 180 bpm	**$150**
Counting off "Celebration" in 5/4	**$175**
Sneaking in next to the bride during the family photo	**$120**
Requesting a medium-rare burger in place of the dinner	**$45**
Being the first in line to kiss the bride	**$50**
Hitting on the bride's mother	**$500**
Showing up ten minutes late for the next set	**$25**
Showing up twenty minutes late for the next set	**$10**
Never showing up for the next set	**$1**

Illustration by Joe King

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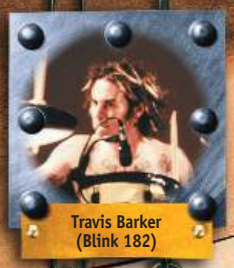
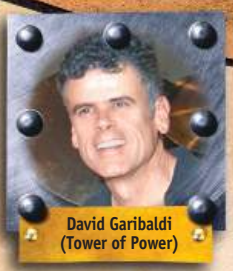
Joey Heredia
(Indepedent)

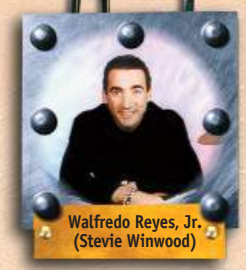

Travis Barker
(Blink 182)

Bernard Purdie
(Independent)

Stephen Perkins
(Jane's Addiction)


David Garibaldi
(Tower of Power)

Mercedes Lander
(Kittie)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Stanton Moore
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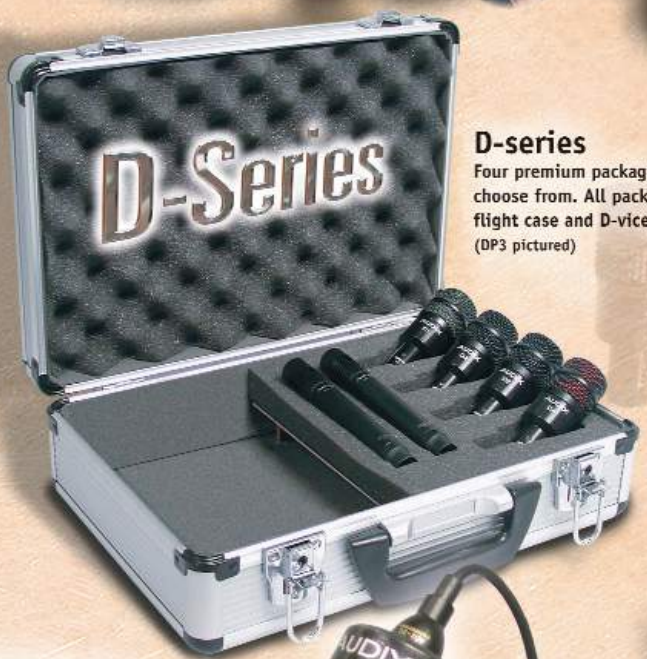

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Building Your Own Drumset

Part 2: Obtaining Your Parts

by Paul Bielewicz

Last month we discussed the pros and cons of building your own drumkit. We also examined the various choices to be made when it came to the design of such a kit. Once you've made your decision and have chosen your design, it's time to obtain the components you'll need for your project.

Creating A Parts List

You should start by creating a complete parts list—also known as a Bill Of Materials (BOM). It's important that you create this list before you order any parts, not only so you'll know what to order, but also so you'll have a realistic idea of the scope of your project.

The most efficient and accurate way to create a BOM is to do it on a drum-by-drum basis. Think about what each drum contains, including everything from the obvious items, like the shells and heads, to the not-so-obvious items, like washers and grommets. We've reproduced the BOM I created for my kit as an example.

Buy Or Build?

You've decided to build your own drumset. But how much of it should you actually build "from scratch"? For example, let's consider the shells.

In order to construct your own wood shells, you'd have to cut or order veneers, specifying thickness and specific sizes for each shell. You'd then have to join the plies into a single round shell. This would involve gluing them in a circular mold or press that would ensure roundness and at the same time heat the shell to cure the glue. To sum it up: It's better to leave this step to the pros.

Shells can be ordered with or without bearing edges. Pre-cut edges usually add $5-$10 to the price of unfinished shells. If you decide to order shells without bearing edges, you will have to cut the edges yourself, ensuring that they are even. The easiest way to do this is with a routing table fitted with a 45° bit (or a rounded bit, depending on the edges desired). Routing is an operation that requires time and skill. Because of my relative lack of woodworking experience, it became a more logical choice for me to order the shells with pre-cut bearing edges.

Nearly all snare drums contain a snare bed. This consists of small depressions on opposite sides of the bottom of the shell where the bearing edges have been filed down. These depressions create a slightly deviated area on the snare head, which seats the snare wires. This allows for better overall contact of the snares with the head and greater snare sensitivity.

The consequence of *not* having a snare bed is that the snares will buzz. As a result, virtually no snare drum is made today without a snare bed. Having your shell supplier pre-cut the snare bed usually adds $10 to $15 to the cost of an uncut shell. Unless you're thoroughly capable of creating this precision groove, you ought to make the investment up front.

Lug Options

While I had planned to machine the lugs for my kit, you may not choose to do the same. Machining the lugs involves designing them (knowing every dimension), drafting the design by hand or by computer, and

either having access to a machine shop or submitting your design to a professional machinist. Also keep in mind that lugs add up. Mine is a relatively simple set, but it still required fifty-two lugs. Take into account the amount of time each lug would take to set up and machine, and decide if it's worth it to you to pay for the machining time. (This will be covered to a greater extent in the section dealing with the lug machining.) For most amateur drum builders, it may be a wiser choice to buy lugs.

Virtually all other metal parts contained on a drumset (such as snare strainers, bass drum spurs, and tom mounts) are impractical to fabricate by hand. Most such parts are widely available in generic versions whose relatively low prices make ordering them the logical choice.

Ordering The Parts

Once you've decided what parts to order, you have lots of sources to choose from. You could go to your local drum shop, search the dozens of different mail-order catalogs that sell drum parts, or order online. I've found that Internet resources can be invaluable to the amateur drum builder. The parts are generally pictured and described clearly, priced reasonably, and delivered within one to two weeks.

To list all possible online outlets for parts would be an article in itself. What I can do is tell you the places I got my parts and explain why I chose those sources.

Shells: For my kit I wanted shells with pre-

Bill Of Materials

Drum	Size Depth x Dia.	Item	Qty	Description	Function
Bass Drum	16x18	Shell	1	Keller maple shell	To form body of drum
		Lugs	20	10 on each side, machined stainless steel	To secure t-rods to shell
		Hoops	2	1.5" width maple	To secure heads to shell
		Tension rods	20	1 for each lug	To secure hoops to shell
		Tension rod washers	20	1 for each lug	To distribute pressure of t-rod
		Claws	20	1 for each lug	To secure t-rods to hoops
		Lug screws	20	1 for each lug	To secure lugs to shell
		Lug washers	20	1 for each lug screw	To distribute pressure of screw
		Air vent (grommet)	1	Polished aluminum	To protect air hole
		Spurs	2	Chrome, heavy duty	To secure bass drum to floor
		Bass drum lifter	1	Gibraltar, attaches to hoop	To raise bass drum to a playable level
		Batter head	1	Aquarian Super Kick II	What the beater hits to produce the sound
		Resonant (display) head	1	Evans black resonant EQ3	Front display head
		Wrap	1	16" width x 57" length	To protect drum shell
Snare Drum	6 x13	Shell	1	Keller maple shell	To form body of drum
		Lugs	16	8 on each side, machined stainless steel	To secure t-rods to shell
		Rims	2	2.3mm black	To secure heads to shell
		Tension rods	16	1 for each lug	To secure rims to shell
		Tension rod washers	16	1 for each lug	To distribute pressure of t-rod
		Lug screws	16	1 for each lug	To secure lugs to shell
		Lug washers	16	1 for each lug screw	To distribute pressure of screw
		Air vent (grommet)	1	Polished aluminum	To protect air hole
		Strainer	1	Nickel Drumworks piston strainer	To raise and lower snares
		Snares	1	PureCussion 13" snares	To give snare distinctive sound
		Butt plate	1	Nickel Drumworks	To attach the snare wires to the shell
		Snare wires	2	Generic	To attach snares to drum
		Batter head	1	Evans HD Dry	What the stick hits to produce the sound
		Snare side head	1	Evans 300 gauge snare head	Gives snares tight response
		Wrap	1	6" width x 41" length	To protect drum shell
10" Tom	8 x10	Shell	1	Keller maple shell	To form body of drum
		Lugs	12	6 on each side, machined stainless steel	To secure t-rods to shell
		Rims	2	2.3mm black	To secure heads to shell
		Tension rods	12	1 for each lug	To secure rims to shell
		Tension rod washers	12	1 for each lug	To distribute pressure of t-rod
		Lug screws	12	1 for each lug	To secure lugs to shell
		Lug washers	12	1 for each lug screw	To distribute pressure of screw
		Air vent (grommet)	1	Polished aluminum	To protect air hole
		Suspension mount	1	DW mini lug STM mount	To suspend drum
		L-rod mount	1	DW L-rod mount	To secure drum to L-rod
		Wrap	1	8" width x 32" length	To protect drum shell
14" Tom	11x14	Shell	1	Keller maple shell	To form body of drum
		Lugs	16	8 on each side, machined stainless steel	To secure t-rods to shell
		Rims	2	2.3mm black	To secure heads to shell
		Tension rods	16	1 for each lug	To secure rims to shell
		Tension rod washers	16	1 for each lug	To distribute pressure of t-rod
		Lug screws	16	1 for each lug	To secure lugs to shell
		Lug washers	16	1 for each lug screw	To distribute pressure of screw
		Air vent (grommet)	1	Polished aluminum	To protect air hole
		Suspension mount	1	DW mini lug STM mount	To suspend drum
		L-rod mount	1	DW L-rod mount	To secure drum to L-rod
		Wrap	1	8" width x 45" length	To protect drum shell

cut double-45° bearing edges. I found that the best prices, selection, and customer testimonials were available at Precisiondrum.com. Precision Drum Company has been around for forty years, and their customer service is phenomenal. All emails and phone calls were returned within hours, and I was dealt with professionally and courteously. The four shells I ordered totaled $504, including edges and snare beds, and were shipped promptly.

Hardware, wrap, etc: Drummaker.com is an online catalog that offers everything from shells, to wrap, to parts. Their prices are fair and their selection is nearly unbeatable. Drummaker.com was my choice for all my rims, screws, tension rods, snare drum parts, and wrap. Shipping took about one week from the order date. All parts were in stock except for the snare drum strainer, which was back-ordered and shipped a few weeks later.

Lugs: As I said earlier, I had originally intended to machine custom lugs myself. My relatively simple design called for a small, round lug about $\frac{5}{8}$" in diameter, drilled and tapped for the tension rod and the lug screw. The first estimate I received was from a CNC machine shop at a local college. The total for all fifty-two lugs, including material, would have been over $600—more than $10 per part. The second estimate I received was even more. This may sound exorbitant, but there's a lot involved. The material alone would cost $200. Programming the lathes, setting up the machines, and other prep work would add an additional $200. The last $200 is for operator time. Most machine shops charge $50-$60 an hour, and fifty-two parts would have taken about four hours to run. In addition, each part would have to be tapped by hand for each hole.

The higher the price rose, the less appealing the idea became. Still not giving up on the idea of machined lugs, I decided to search the Internet. Not too many choices presented themselves. Many custom drum makers machine their own lugs, but few sell them separately. Most only supply them with their own custom kits. After I'd narrowed my choices down to a few, it turned out that the lugs that came closest to my original design were offered by Adonis Drums (www.adonisdrums.com). In addition, at an average of about $4.50 per part, they were one of the least expensive available. Luckily, their lugs also came in the anodized black color I desired.

Adonis offers specific lugs for specific applications, namely tom lugs, snare lugs, and bass drum lugs. The tom lugs are fairly standard. The bass drum lugs include a $\frac{1}{8}$" gasket/spacer to account for the thickness of bass drum hoops.

Adonis' snare lugs are double-sided, which offers a functional advantage. Snare-drum heads are often tensioned very high, which could put strain on a single-sided lug and possibly pull it away from the body of the drum. When tension from both heads of the snare is applied to a double-sided lug, it pulls evenly, better dispersing that tension and putting less strain on the lug itself.

I ordered twenty-eight tom lugs, sixteen bass drum lugs, and eight snare lugs. The Adonis Web site has a convenient online ordering form, and communication was prompt and friendly. Lead times average about two weeks.

Drumheads

I put this part into its own section for two reasons. First, although you obviously

have to choose which drumheads will go on your new kit to begin with, they are the one component that isn't permanent. You can vary or replace them at will for different purposes—which you certainly aren't going to do with the lugs, the wrap, or the fittings on the kit.

The other reason to set drumheads apart is their sheer variety. There are hundreds of different choices, in terms of brands, thickness, ply count, coating, and muffling characteristics. Different heads complement different woods, size configurations, and shell thickness differently, and it's important to understand these relationships. Each brand offers different lines appropriate not only to different drums, but also to different playing situations. So when deciding what heads to use, you must not only take into account all these factors, but also assess the type of drumming situation in which they will most often be used.

Nearly all drumheads are made of Mylar. This thin, strong, waterproof plastic has been the industry standard for nearly forty years. Other variations include natural animal skin, synthetics such as Kevlar, and a few other materials. But for this article I'll concentrate on conventional Mylar heads.

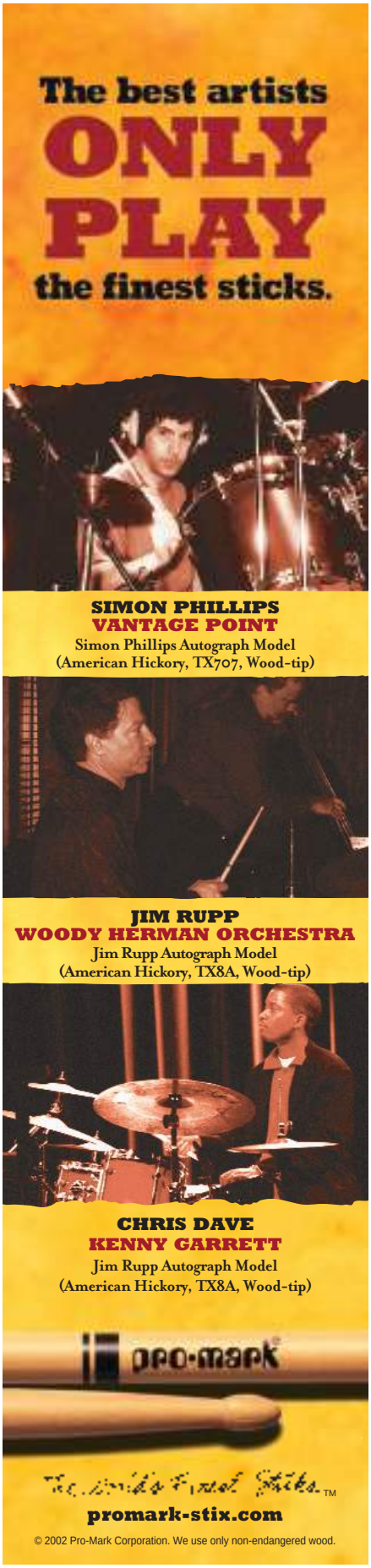
Heads are sub-classified into batter or resonant heads. Batter heads are mounted on the top of the drum, and are the ones you hit. Batter heads define the drum's pitch and many of its acoustic characteristics. Resonant heads are mounted on the underside of the drum. Their purpose is to shape and clarify the tone, while adding resonance.

For batter heads, the first thing you must choose is ply count. Most lines of drumheads are available in one- or two-ply versions. This simply means either one sheet of Mylar, or two sheets sealed together. A two-ply head is usually twice as thick, and this greatly affects the drum's sound. A two-ply head will lower the pitch and deaden the resonance more readily than a one-ply head will. In addition, two-ply heads are more durable. Many rock and metal drummers prefer two-ply heads for these reasons. One-ply heads, on the other hand, are thinner, so they allow the drum to ring out more. They tend to produce a slightly higher pitch and a purer, clearer tone. One-ply heads are suited for jazz, fusion, recording, and any situation where the drummer might not hit as hard.

Most heads are also offered in a choice of coated or clear. Coated heads are sprayed with a white textured material that has several purposes. First, it tends to muffle the resonance of the drum slightly. Coated heads round out the tone and warm the sound. They therefore sound great on older kits or on newer kits where one might seek the tonal qualities of an older kit. The second purpose of coated heads is for brushwork. The coated surface lends itself to a better feel and more volume and response when played at low volume with brushes.

Many heads also have built-in features, which tend to shape sound by damping resonance. An example of this would be Remo's Pinstripe heads. Pinstripes are two-ply heads that have layers of adhesive at their edges to deaden overtones. Evans offers Hydraulic heads, which are two-ply with a thin layer of oil between the plies. Aquarian offers Studio-X heads, which are one-ply with a thin muffling strip along the outside. The list of specialty heads for specific purposes is nearly endless.

Resonant heads should be thin, and are



usually clear. A resonant head that is too thick will deaden the drum's tone, and a coated head can muffle it. (However, when a warm, "vintage" tone is desired, a coated head on the bottom can help obtain that sound.) Most drumhead manufacturers offer resonant heads in choices of thickness and color.

Head selection is a very personal choice, and I cannot presume to tell you which heads will sound best on your kit. Again, I can tell you what I chose for my kit, and why.

For the bass drum batter head, I chose Aquarian's Super Kick II. A large part of what contributes to the pitch and volume of the sound created by a drum is the volume of air displaced when that drum is hit. Hitting a bass drum displaces a larger amount of air than a tom, and therefore produces a louder sound and a lower pitch. Because my bass drum is only 18" in diameter, the volume of the air on the inside of the drum is much smaller than that of a conventional (20" or 22") bass drum. Therefore, I don't want to lose even more of that volume by putting a big pillow inside the drum. But without *any* muffling, the drum would ring—sounding more like a tom than a bass drum. The Super Kick II is a two-ply head with a narrow felt muffling strip around the circumference. It deadens the over-ring of the drum without sacrificing the air volume.

For the bass drum resonant head, an Evans EQ1 was my choice. The front head on a bass drum rings too—often undesirably. The EQ1 has a small plastic muffling strip, along with tiny vents lining the circumference, both of which slightly decrease ring and dry out the sound.

For the toms, I wanted batter heads that would give a full, round tone, but would also slightly deaden over-ring. Maple drums have a round, warm tone fundamentally, so there was no reason to choose something that would drastically deaden their tone. So I decided on a single-ply head. A thin, clear head would ring *too* much, though, so I did need a head with some slight muffling characteristics. Aquarian's Studio-X was my choice. It's a single-ply head with a small muffling ring at the edge. It allows the positive tonal characteristics of the drum to shine through while also damping undesirable over-ring. I went with Evans clear Resonant heads for the bottoms of the toms.

Due to its smaller diameter and thick ply count, the snare drum will have a fundamentally high pitch. A two-ply head would contradict this, so I decided on a single-ply head. I also wanted something that would slightly deaden the over-ring, but not drastically. For these reasons, I chose an Evans HD Dry with dry vents. A small muffling strip around the outside of the head deadens ring, and tiny air holes punctured around the edge dry the tone. For the snare-side head I selected an Evans 300-gauge snare-side model.

Receiving The Parts

Let's assume you've ordered your parts. Now comes the waiting game. Everything on my kit came from one of four sources: Drummaker.com, Adonis Drums, Precision Drum Co., and a small local music store. I ordered all the parts within a period of a few days, and almost everything arrived within two weeks. (Because the snare strainer had to be back-ordered, it arrived about three weeks after the other parts had.) All the items were packed well and arrived securely and undamaged.

Once you've received your packages, it's important to thoroughly inspect them before you even open them. Make sure there is no indication of damage to the packages during shipping. If there is, you should immediately contact the shipping service (UPS, Federal Express, US Postal Service, or whoever delivered the goods). Once you *do* open the packages, make sure that nothing has been damaged, and that everything is present. Each package that I was shipped included an invoice that served not only as a receipt, but also as a packing list. I went down the items one by one as I unpacked the boxes to make sure that each item was there. Obviously, if something is missing from your packages, you should contact the vendor right away to rectify that situation.

Well! You've made your choices, you've spent your money, and you've obtained and verified all of your parts. Now the fun begins: actually *building* your drums. We'll launch into that process next month. See you then!

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VIC FIRTH, INC.

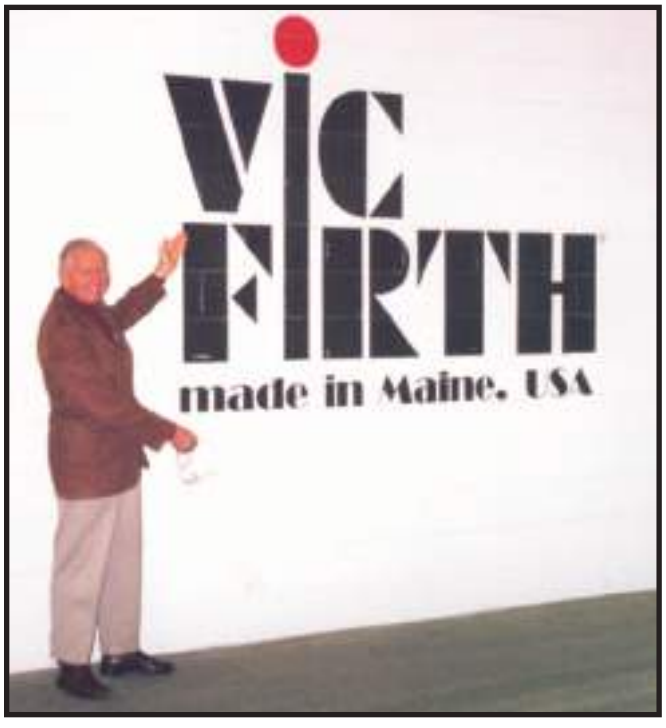
Mastering The Craft

by Rick Van Horn

Vic Firth, Inc. has been making drumsticks for almost forty years. The business started in the basement of Vic's Boston-area home, with his children helping him stamp and bag sticks that he made by hand. Today, Vic's sticks are made in Newport, Maine, in a milling factory that dates back to 1865. But while the factory building may appear quaint, the stick-making operation it contains is state-of-the-art. And the business that began in Vic's basement has evolved into the world's largest manufacturer of drumsticks and related accessories.

Production

Vic Firth sticks begin life as 1"x1" boards purchased from mills in the southern US. "We could buy ready-made dowels," says production supervisor David Crocker. "But we prefer to do that operation ourselves. Green lumber can contain up to 60% water. Controlling the drying process in our own kilns allows us to eliminate the stress created in the wood during that process. That way we can be assured of straighter dowels. And straight dowels are a key ingredient to making straight sticks.



After the dowels are created, they're sanded on a machine that David designed. In addition to smoothing the surface, the sander actually removes any irregularities or "high spots," further ensuring that the dowels are as straight as can be.

Most drumsticks are cut on industrial lathes. Vic Firth sticks, on the other hand, are made by a process called centerless grinding. Aluminum oxide grinding stones are created with the exact profile of every drumstick model. Grinding the sticks on the finished stones is the easy part. Creating the stones in the first place is the challenge.

"We'll work with an endorser or our in-house design people to come up with the shape of the stick that we want," David explains. "We use a metal-working lathe for the development of new models, because it has tremendously fine tolerance capabilities. Once we've made the samples, we send them to the person responsible for the design. He or she can play them and suggest changes.

"Ultimately we arrive at a final design that's used to produce a hard steel template matching the exact profile of the stick to an accuracy of .001". That template, in turn, is used to create a grinding wheel with one half of the profile of the stick. A second wheel gets the other half. So each drumstick is ultimately created by means of a two-step grinding process."

The grinding process generates a lot of heat, so a constant stream of water cools the

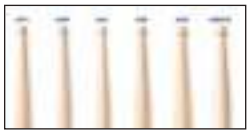
VIC'S VARIETIES

Vic Firth's product line includes several distinctly different drumstick and mallet lines, along with a wide variety of "alternative" stick-type devices. Here's a quick overview of the Vic Firth catalog.

AMERICAN CUSTOM
Conceived and engineered personally by Vic, all twelve models are turned from rock maple for light weight, speed, flex, and rebound. Recommended for drummers playing lighter types of music, or who prefer a large stick without a lot of weight.

AMERICAN CLASSIC
Sticks made of hickory, a dense wood with little flex for a more pronounced sound. Nylon-tipped versions that match their wood counterparts in size and shape are available on most models.

AMERICAN HERITAGE
Identical to the six most popular American Classic models (7A, 8D, 5A, 5B, 2B, and Rock), but made of maple rather than hickory for lighter weight, greater rebound, and improved flex. Each model is also available with a nylon tip.



AMERICAN SOUND
Also based on the six most popular American Classic models, but with full round wood tips to bring increased focus and clarity to drums and cymbals.

AMERICAN JAZZ
Six hickory wood-tip models. Each features a long taper in the shaft and a small teardrop tip for exceptional rebound and dark, focused cymbal sounds.

SIGNATURE SERIES DRUMSTICKS
Developed with top drummers from various musical styles. The designs reflect their namesakes' musical requirements in terms of balance, feel, sound projection, and cymbal color. All colored sticks feature a clear natural tip. Most sticks are hickory, a few are maple.

WORLD CLASSIC
Unique sticks and mallets for drums, timbales, and percussion. Designed in conjunction with top percussionists Alex Acuña and Bashiri Johnson.

EMIL RICHARDS
A variety of mallets and special percussion effects, including the Rattle Mallet, a cross between a yarn keyboard mallet and a maraca.

BRUSHES AND BLADES
Vic Firth offers Heritage and Jazz wire brushes, along with Rock Rake and Jazz Rake plastic brushes. Also available are Dreadlocks ("brushes" formed of heavy braided steel wire) and Blades (a high-density plastic implement shaped like a blade of a fan, designed for a variety of striking techniques).

RUTES
Multi-rod implements designed to provide drummers with alternative sounds and feels. Most models feature birch dowels secured in a birch drumstick handle. The 505 model features thirty-one plastic bristles in a nylon handle. Moveable bands on each model adjust the effect from crisp to splashy.

AMERICAN CUSTOM TIMPANI MALLETS
This line reflects Vic's fifty years of experience as solo timpanist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Each mallet is turned from a single piece of rock maple and features a round seamless head for a big, bright sound.

EUROPEAN CLASSIC TIMPANI MALLETS
These six mallet models produce a sound unique to the Baroque and classical repertoire. The shafts are of bamboo for a light feel. The heads are slightly undersized for a sharp and focused sound.

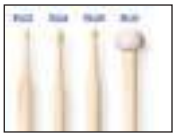
SOUNDPOWER BASS DRUM AND GONG MALLETS
Concert bass drum mallets combine seamless, round felt heads with contoured maple handles for deep, dark sound without excessive weight. Gong mallets feature maple handles and fleece-covered or yarn-wound heads.

AMERICAN CUSTOM KEYBOARD MALLETS
Thirteen models of wound, unwound, and specialty keyboard mallets with birch shafts.

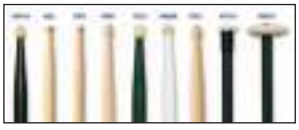
ORCHESTRAL KEYBOARD MALLETS
Six mallets designed for xylophone and seven for bells. With rattan handles for flexibility, they are also recommended for marching-band and drum & bugle corps use.

SIGNATURE KEYBOARD MALLETS
Designed in conjunction with keyboard luminaries such as Gary Burton, Ed Mann, and Robert Van Sice. A variety of yarn- and cord-wound mallets with various cores and handles are offered.

TOM GAUGER SPECIALTY MALLETS AND DRUMSTICKS
Tom Gauger's mallets and drumsticks reflect his nearly forty-year career as percussionist with the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops. The line features several stick/mallet combinations.



CORPSMASTER



The Corpsmaster series offers several lines of signature snare-drum sticks, as well as drum, timpani, and keyboard mallets—all designed for indoor or outdoor marching-percussion use.

EDUCATION PACKS
Designed to include the correct tools (sticks, mallets, pads, and books) for producing quality sound at the student level, Education Packs were developed with a "step up" approach.

ACCESSORIES
Vic Firth offers an extensive line of stick and mallet bags, Isolation Headphones, Vic Grip "tackifying" cloths, and wearables.

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sticks and the grinding wheels. While this might seem odd given the previously expressed concern for moisture content in the sticks, David puts things into perspective. "The wood dries for two weeks in the kilns. Each stick is only under water on the grinder for about seven seconds. Then it goes into a drying rack with plenty of air circulation. The water only penetrates one or two cells deep to start with. After about thirty minutes it's all flashed off, so it doesn't change the moisture content of the stick."

Finishing

Vic Firth, Inc. uses two different methods to finish drumsticks. Clear-finished sticks are placed in a tumbler, along with dozens of small wooden balls and a carefully formulated lacquer solution. "The balls carry the finish down onto the tapers and finish up the front end of the stick," David explains. "After five minutes, the solid cover of the tumbler is replaced by a slotted cover so the fumes can get out. The tumbler rolls for an hour and twenty minutes, and we're done. It sounds simple, but it took three months to

Mike Gault (VP of production), Rick Drumm (president), and Vic Firth stand in front of one of the company's seven wood-drying kilns—providing an idea of the scale on which manufacturing takes place.

Vic Firth drumsticks are created by a process known as centerless grinding, which uses abrasive wheels. A separate wheel is required for every drumstick model. Production supervisor David Crocker stands before just a few of the wheels necessary to create the extensive Firth line.

Signature models are dipped to receive their coloring. This process leaves the tips uncolored to avoid marks on heads and cymbals. Rick Drumm and Vic Firth are shown here in front of a batch of sticks air-drying after being dipped.

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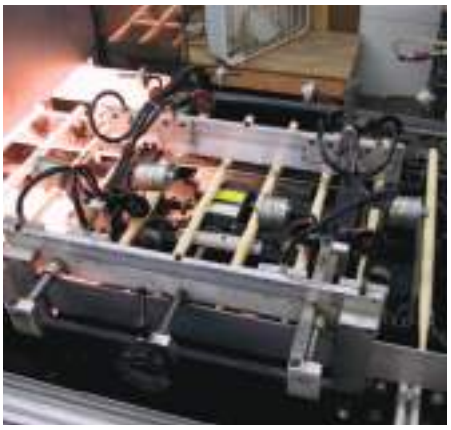

Stamping a logo might seem a pretty mundane production step—but not when it's combined with computerized infrared inspection that evaluates each stick for straightness. Any stick not meeting rigid standards is automatically rejected.

Vic Firth sticks undergo the most sophisticated sorting process in the industry. Computerized conveyer machinery first sorts sticks by weight to within 2 grams of each other...

...and then by pitch to within a quarter tone of each other.

figure out how big the tumbler should be and how fast it should rotate—never mind all the chemistry involved."

Vic Firth himself explains how colored sticks are made. "All of our colored models are endorser sticks," he says. "So besides how the stick looks, we have to be concerned with what Dave Weckl or Steve Gadd thinks about how the stick actually *feels*.

"We used to color the sticks with the same tumbling process as clear sticks," Vic continues. "But that process colored the tips of the sticks. We tried really hard to find a finish that wouldn't come off on drumheads or cymbals. As far as we can tell, there is no such thing. Now each stick is individually dipped—*up* to the tip but not *onto* it. So we get a colored stick with a clear tip that won't mark heads or cymbals."

Colored sticks feature a two-step process. A stain coat penetrates the wood surface to provide depth of color. An enamel-like top coat goes over that. When the top coat gets chipped up, the stain underneath prevents the white wood from immediately showing through.

The coloring material is individually formulated for each model. Says Vic, "It's not just a matter of throwing on a pigment, because the formulation doesn't just color the stick. We've gone through different finishes that look the same to the eye, but feel different to the hand. The red finish on Weckl's stick has a certain property that feels right to Dave. Our white finish is designed to make the majority of the marching corps drummers happy. The white and red finishes feel very different in your hand."

After sticks are shaped and finished, they go through a computerized printing machine to receive their logo. But a quality-control step has been incorporated into this seemingly mundane operation. Attached to the printer is an infrared fiberoptic sensor that measures the straightness of each drumstick as it's rotated under a detector. Sticks that aren't straight get rejected automatically.

Weight-Matching And Pitch-Pairing

"When I first described our sticks as being 'pitch-paired,'" says Vic, "I got a lot of raised eyebrows. Now it's very appropriate. We have what I believe to be the industry's most sophisticated system for sorting drumsticks."

It's hard to dispute Vic's claim when one views the elaborate, room-sized machinery designed by David Crocker specifically to

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perform weight- and pitch-matching functions. It's *so* elaborate, in fact, that it begs the question: Why go to so much trouble to match sticks up like that?

David Crocker replies, "There's a lot of variation from one piece of wood to another based on growth conditions, source location, and so forth. In a given run of sticks there might be as much as a 20-gram difference between the heaviest and lightest stick. So in order to get a pair of sticks that feel and sound the same, we have to go through both a weight-matching process and a tonal-matching process."

The weight-sorting machine consists of a computerized weighing station at the head of a conveyer system lined with twenty-four receiving bins. Each bin represents a 2-gram weight increment. The loader feeds the sticks onto a scale that records the weight and feeds the information into the computer. The computer remembers the position of the stick on the conveyor, and when the stick is in front of the appropriate bin, the machine drops it off.

"After sorting, every stick inside each bin is within 2 grams in weight," says David. "You can't perceive a 2-gram difference by hand. We run a batch of sticks until we accumulate full bins of sticks that weigh 44 grams, 46 grams, 48 grams, and so on.

"Now, there *is* a correspondence between the weight of a stick and its sound," Dave continues. "But it's only a *rough* correspondence. In general, the heavier a stick, the higher-pitched it will be. But you can get a heavy stick that for some reason will ring low. So we take all the sticks of a given weight and run them through the tonal sorting machine."

The tonal sorter taps each stick as it's rotated above a piece of PVC pipe with a microphone at the bottom. The signal goes to equipment that produces a frequency-spectrum analysis of the stick. Each stick is struck three times as it rotates, because it may vibrate a little differently depending on the grain orientation. The minimum and maximum frequencies are evaluated to make sure they are reasonably close. Then the results of the three hits are averaged, and the stick is assigned a frequency value.

"The sticks are then sent down another sorting conveyer," says David. "The computer sorts them into one of thirty-two bins, according to their frequency. Each bin represents a quarter tone, which in this frequency range is about 6 or 7 cycles per second. That's the tonal range we're looking for in sticks that weigh the same amount."

But the sorting process isn't finished yet. In the last step, technicians examine the sticks to make the best possible cosmetic matches—light or dark, clear or with grain showing. The selected sticks are slid into sleeves to keep them paired. At the end of the process, each pair of Vic Firth sticks is straight within .025", weight-paired within 2 grams, tonally paired within a quarter tone, and color-matched.

Innovation

Constantly appearing innovative is a challenge for any manufacturer. But it's especially difficult for drumstick companies, since drumsticks are functional items that can't be varied much in order to make them "new" or "different." How does Vic Firth, Inc. address that problem?

"We look at everybody's line and try to see where things may have been missed along the way," Vic replies. "One of the things that we noticed a few years ago was a disparity between wood- and nylon-tipped versions of the same models. The tips had different shapes, and the nylon-tipped stick had a different neck to accommodate the generic tips that used to be put on nylon-tip sticks. The diameter might even be different.

"We redid our tooling so that the nylon-tip sticks within our American Classic series had exactly the same dimensions as their wood-tip brothers, and those tips were exactly the same shape. Since then, we realized that some drummers prefer round tips. So our American Sound series offers exactly the same 5A, 7A, 2B, and Rock sticks—the basic models—with round tips.

"Next, we thought about drummers who prefer the lighter feel of maple sticks. So for our American Heritage series we again took basic 5A, 5B, and 7A models and made them out of maple. We've offered American Custom maple sticks for quite some time, but they all have different shapes and styles.

"The drumstick business keeps repeating itself on the four basic models," Vic continues. "The 7A, 5A, 5B, and 2B models account for something like 85% of the business. So most companies are innovative on the periphery more than they are with the

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basics. In our case, we've taken the basics and innovated far beyond anybody else by offering identical specs in different kinds of woods, and with different tip options. With our line choices, a drummer doesn't have to sacrifice feel to achieve sound."

Educational Activities

Education is an important facet of Vic Firth's operation. Says Vic, "The future of everything is in our youth, whether we're talking music, politics, or business. We support sports organizations that need help to keep kids off the street. And, of course, we want to get kids interested in music."

Company president Rick Drumm adds, "We have programs for private drum teachers, scholastic educators, colleges, and drum corps. We're trying to give educators tools that will help them build and maintain their teaching profession, and retain their students for a longer period of time. One of the ways we do that is through newsletters that deal with topics specific to education."

Vic Firth, Inc. also helps to put new drum books directly into the hands of drum teachers, via a unique program. "We've created a list of drum teachers to whom we send books directly," says Rick. "Warner Bros., Alfred Publishing, Hal Leonard, and Carl Fischer all participate in the program. They provide the books, we provide the service. Teachers who want to take advantage of this program can sign up via the Internet or by telephone. For more information they can contact Neil Larrivee, our director of education. They'll receive our newsletter, sample publications, and sample products.

"Of course, it's a two-way street," Rick continues. "We solicit input from these teachers on the development of programs, and occasionally on the development of products. It's very important to get new ideas from qualified people. To help us in that area, we host a meeting of fifty to sixty drum corps educators/instructors at every PASIC. We've also had meetings of private drum teachers."

Vic Firth adds, "We had a meeting in Boston not too long ago, attended by sixty-five teachers. The exchange of ideas got so exciting that a session scheduled for two hours lasted the whole day. We came away exhilarated, exhausted, and very excited with the results. Teachers from France, England, Italy, Norway, and Sweden have also participated in the program."

"One of the reasons we're doing this," says Rick Drumm, "is that you can't teach today the way you taught twenty years ago. The teaching experience is totally different, as are the students' expectations. Today, kids demand a certain amount of instant gratification from whatever they are involved in. When we were coming up we had school bands and lots of garage bands. That doesn't exist today as it did back then. So today's drum teachers need to create opportunities for interaction. The student needs to associate what he or she is doing in that lesson with a real musical experience. This is information that we gain from the meetings and then share with other teachers."

The Endorsement Game

The endorser roster for Vic Firth sticks includes some legendary names, along with many hot new players. Some people believe endorsers are important, while others do not. What's the Vic Firth corpo-

rate line on the subject?

Rick Drumm replies, "What we want, first and foremost, is somebody who plays our product because it works for them and they believe in the company. That kind of endorser is a valuable marketing asset."

"I probably deserve the credit—or the blame—for the current endorser situation," adds Vic Firth, "because I was the one who started with signature sticks. Unfortunately, I think it's become a tool for competitors just to get drummers: 'We'll make you a signature stick if you play our brand.' We don't offer that sort of deal.

"Just because you're a good player doesn't mean we'll make a stick for you," Vic continues, firmly. "You have to bring something new to the table in terms of design concept. Otherwise we'd have over three hundred signature sticks. And even if a noteworthy drummer has an original design idea that's marketable based on his name value, it also has to meet another important criteria. It has to be *musical*. Is it musically something that a drummer will gain from? That's still our most important base of operation."

Quality

Vic Firth, Inc. goes to great lengths to produce sticks with very fine tolerances of straightness, weight, and tone. Yet a drummer still might take them out on a gig, whack them a few times, and break them. When asked about this, Vic replies, "The drummer who does that should take some lessons, because that's usually not a matter of defects in the wood or in the manufacturing. That sort of breakage usually comes about by a lack of proper technique. Our signature artists are very busy drummers, and they take so few sticks a year it's amazing. That's because they play correctly.

"I don't mean to demean young drummers today," Vic continues. "They just haven't had a lot of training. That's why we are so big on education. We encourage drummers as strongly as possible to study and take lessons. Number one, it saves on equipment. Number two, it saves on muscles. It really is important.

"Obviously we can't guarantee our sticks not to break," Vic continues. "But we *do* guarantee them to be matched, and we guarantee the quality of the wood to be as perfect as possible. Occasionally, wood slips by us that has an imperfection in it, which could cause a stick to break. And we've had mallet tips come off. There's always *something* that could go wrong, by virtue of the fact that there are human beings involved in these processes, and Mother Nature loves to play tricks on us with the way she grows trees. However, if anyone has a legitimate complaint about something going wrong or being defective in any way, we replace the item without question. If a stick *does* come back, our quality department takes that stick apart in order to find out what went wrong. We keep track of the defects and we adjust our process to make sure it doesn't happen again.

"We start with a quality product, with the best service in the world, and we guarantee it." Vic concludes. "Everything is built around that—all our relationships with our dealers and our consumers. That's how it began, and that's how it remains. We are the number-one drumstick manufacturer in the world. To maintain that position, we must maintain the integrity that started it in the beginning."

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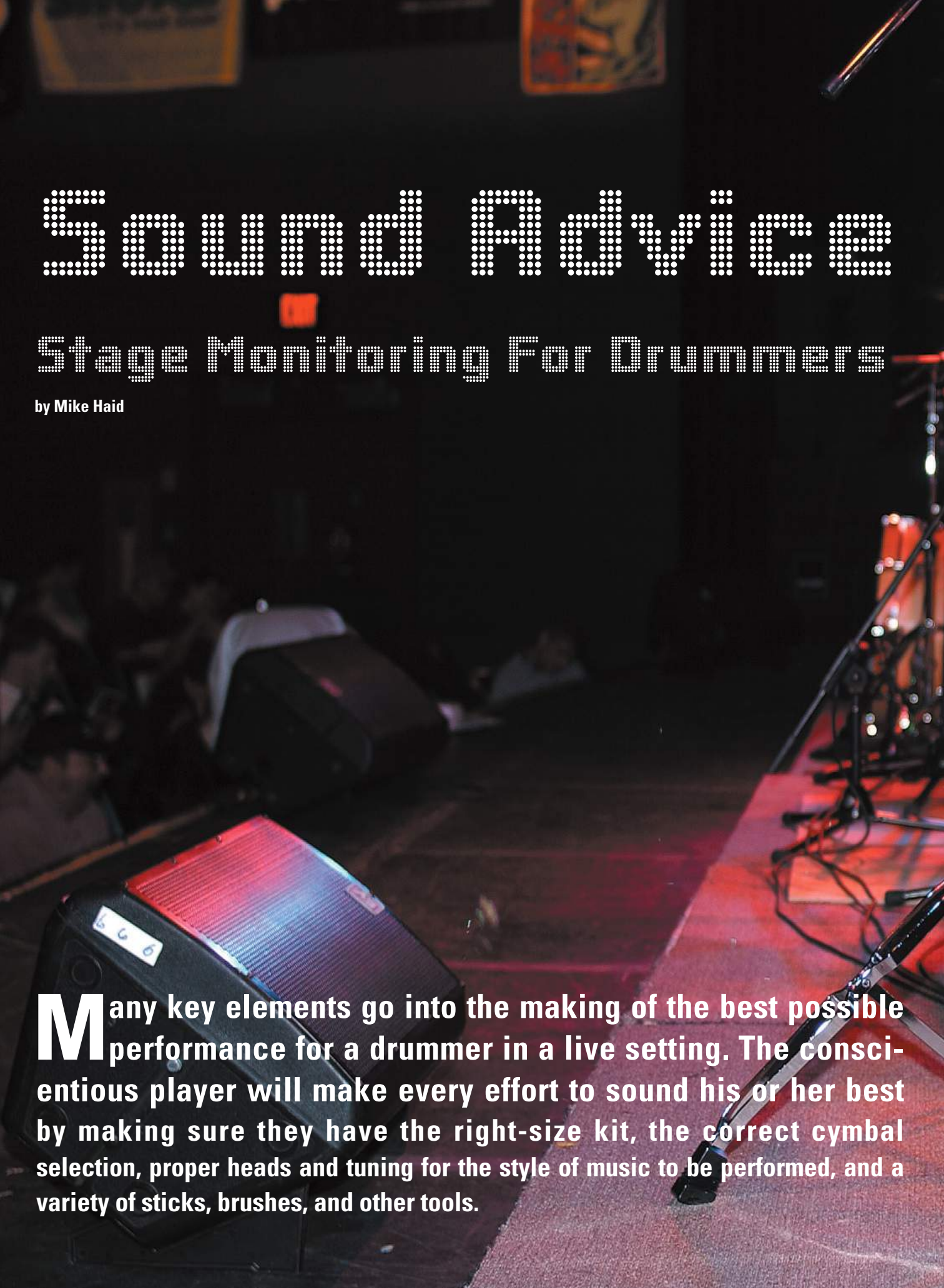
Sound Advice

Stage Monitoring For Drummers

by Mike Haid



Many key elements go into the making of the best possible performance for a drummer in a live setting. The conscientious player will make every effort to sound his or her best by making sure they have the right-size kit, the correct cymbal selection, proper heads and tuning for the style of music to be performed, and a variety of sticks, brushes, and other tools.

Once these elements are all in place, the next step is to make sure you're going to be able to hear what you need to in order for you to perform at your best. Unless it's a small acoustic jazz setting, you're going to be dealing with some type of amplified monitoring system. Without the correct tools to hear your drums—and the other bandmembers—in a way that will enhance your playing experience, you're in for a frustrating and uninspired gig.

Monitoring can enhance or destroy a drummer's concentration and attitude during a live show. Don't feel alone if you've had to deal with poor monitoring, unconcerned or inexperienced engineers controlling your mix, or acoustically poor venues. Even the most experienced pros have to deal with these issues.

We asked several of the world's top touring drummers to share their thoughts on how they deal with live monitoring situations, what they like to hear to help them play their best, and what type of stage monitoring they feel works best for them.

Jim Keltner
studio legend

I like for things to blend well in my stage monitor. I want to hear a "smear" of the whole band. For that reason, I can't use in-ear monitors. I've tried them in the past, and I would love to see them work at some point, but I don't use them now. I think everyone in the band would have to use them in order for everyone to benefit from them.

The obvious problem with monitor speakers is that you run the risk of not having anything to hang your hat on. In other words, if you can't find definition in certain things, it can drive you nuts and you can have a horrible night. I've had many of those, playing live gigs.

On the Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young tour, I had a hard time because, to begin with, there were five guitar players. You get all those guitars in the same monitor and it can get crowded with sound. Then there were certain venues where the sound was stellar. The feedback (so to speak) I always got from the monitor engineers was that it simply depends on the room as to how you're going to hear things. Every room is different, and the requirements that you try to set up for yourself change from room to room. So it got to a point where I would ask the engineer what we were in for each night.

What I love to hear when I go to a concert is a balance of the whole band that is so beautiful that, occasionally, you'll actually lose the backbeat in the overall sound of the music. It's as though the music as a whole actually rises above the individual players. If I hear the backbeat slamming away in such a precise way all through a song, my mind starts to wander and I lose the music altogether.

Just for the record, that never happened to me at a Marvin Gaye concert! I used to love to see him live. His band had such a great blend on stage. I really prefer a great blend when playing, or listening. When there's too much separation, it starts to become non-musical, at least to my ears. Separation has always been the big thing in the studio, but too much separation live can be awful.

Scott Underwood

Train

I have a separate split that I run to a sixteen-channel Mackie mixer that sits on stage with me and allows me to have full control over the mix for my in-ear monitoring system. As good as this setup sounds, I find it to be less than adequate as far as my being able to "feel" what I'm playing. So I also put a sub (monitor speaker) behind me and send some toms, kick, and snare through it. The combination of these elements provides me with the perfect sound.

Ricky Lawson

Steely Dan, Phil Collins

On the Steely Dan tour I used a speaker monitor and in-ear monitors. We had some wonderful engineers and technicians on the road with us, which made it very easy for me to hear exactly what I needed to hear to perform at my best. My monitor was a big 15" speaker cabinet just for my kick drum so I could feel it all over my body. The *mix* that I was actually listening to was in the in-ear monitors.

I normally want to hear the drums clearly in that mix. On stage, the bass guitar rig is usually right beside me. So I don't put much bass in my monitor. I'll also have just a tad of the lead keyboard player. This is because, if they rush or drag, it can throw off your time a little. So I add just enough keyboard to feel it. Then I'll include a little of the lead vocal to follow. I can hear the rest of the band from the house system, so I don't need anything else in my monitors. It would be way too much to add anyone else, since we had four horns, three female singers, two keyboard players, and two guitar players.

I got into in-ear monitors when I was with Stevie Wonder. What's great about the system is that engineers can talk to you without anyone knowing or hearing what they're saying. They would talk to Stevie on stage and tell him which way to walk. Like, "Okay, get up and walk to your left, now stop and turn to your right," and so on, so that he could walk off the stage by himself.

The new in-ear monitors are wonderful. Shure makes some great ones that I've been using. The engineers controlled my mix on the Steely Dan tour. But with Phil Collins, they had it set up so that I could control my own mix. There was a small mixer set up behind my drumkit, and they would send me a signal from all the instruments on stage. That worked really well.

Overall, my sound philosophy is "less is more" so I can focus on the drums. Most of the time, the house speakers are so loud that you don't need much in your monitors anyway.

"Going from big venues to smaller ones takes some getting used to. What I've found best to do is not fight it. I lighten up a little bit, turn down the monitors, and try to make the instrument work for me."

—Simon Phillips

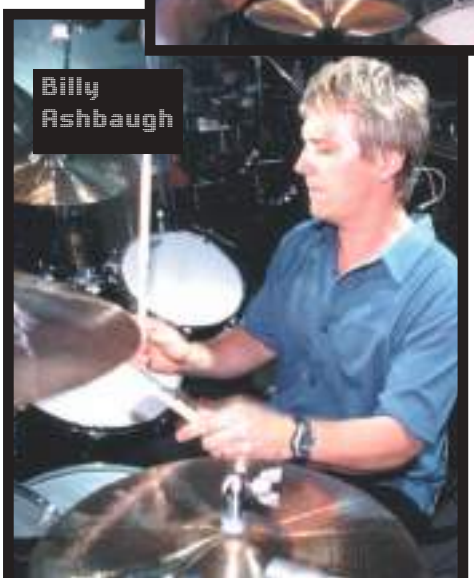
Simon Phillips

Toto, Vantage Point

I don't use in-ear monitors. If I were playing loud rock music with no dynamics, then they might work fine. But it's quite amazing what you can't hear when you shove earplugs in your ears. I'm too sensitive to the sound difference, so I prefer good old-fashion speakers as monitors.

I actually use the same monitors that I've used since 1984. They're the Meyer UPA speakers. The only difference now is that they're self-powered, so I don't need an amp rack to power them. After fifteen years of using the same monitor speakers, I'm not going to change now. They're quite expensive, but well worth it.

Over the years my on-stage system has



"I have a click in my in-ear monitors. I try to keep it at the lowest level possible. It may sound funny, but for me, it's harder to groove if the click is too loud in the mix."

—Billy Ashbaugh

gotten smaller and smaller. I used to use a sub bass cabinet. I don't bother with that anymore. I used to have them on tall stands, at ear level, like a huge pair of headphones. I now have them resting on specially made "shoes" that angle the speakers up at me from the ground. That also helps support the low end.

The only time I really need a sub [low end] cabinet is for big outdoor festivals. Then it's handy to have a little extra bottom end. Many times it depends on how much of the house system you can hear. Most of the bottom end comes from the subs in the house in a live situation. So I use a pair of Meyer UPAs run in stereo.

I've also done my own monitor mix since 1984. So I'm a little spoiled. But if the mix ends up sounding like crap, I only have myself to blame. If the room sounds bad acoustically, there's no amount of amplification that's going to help. A lot of times, it's your brain that plays tricks on you. You have to get used to the environment that you're playing in.

Classic example: On the Who tour in 1989, every show was outdoors. Every venue was a huge sixty- to seventy-thousand-seat arena. After a while, you get used to that sound. But we did one indoor show in Vancouver. I remember that I couldn't get over the sound of being indoors after playing so many outdoor shows. It was unbelievable, the cacophony of being indoors and hearing all the reflections and weirdness of sounds. I just couldn't believe the difference. And I had been used to playing that type of venue for years. Yet my brain became accustomed to the sound of the outdoor venues, which doesn't have a lot of reverb. You do get some reflection, like a slap effect, but that's about it.

It's common that after a band plays a few gigs together they sound better. There are many reasons for this. They start to play tighter together, they get their sound levels sorted out, and their brains get used to the environment that they're in. Going from big venues to smaller venues takes some getting used to. I have to make adjustments in my playing as well. What I've found best to do is not fight it. I lighten up a little bit, turn down my monitors a little, and try to make the instrument work for me.

What I do is get a signal from the rest of the band and run them into my little Mackie mixer. I try to mix everything evenly and make it sound as much like a recording as possible. But I also must keep in mind that a monitor system is primarily for hearing certain things that you cannot hear.

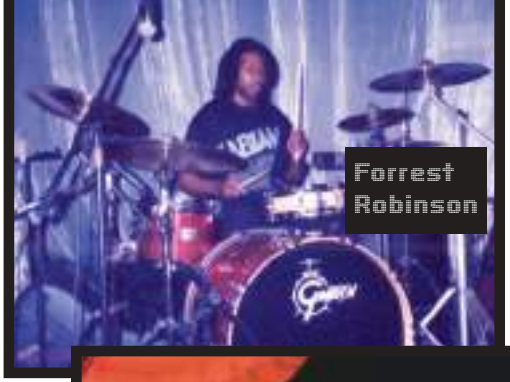
I would say that from the mid-'80s to the early '90s, you could take an output from my mix, record it onto DAT, and have a full-sounding mix. I used to carry a set of compressors for some of the instruments. I had two reverb units, and I would send their returns to the main house system so that I could control all of my reverb changes. I programmed reverb for the snare, octobans, and toms for each song.

The front house engineer would have four fader controls, which were reverb one, left and right, and reverb two, left and right. He would control the reverb volume, which we had to be very careful with in the monitors because we could run into feedback problems if it wasn't set just right. Then he also had an extra reverb unit that he had full control over. My concern was that the pre-delay was set for the timbre of each song so that it was either big and long or short and tight.

When I stopped doing the mega-tours, I stopped using that setup because it was not affordable to rent all the gear—and you couldn't afford the *time* to set it up every day. So from that point I went back to just putting what I couldn't hear in my monitors.

Typically what I do now for the small venues, in terms of drumkit monitoring, is add a little bit of kick drum, octobans, and gong drum. That's it. For bigger venues I may include the toms and a little of the main snare as well. I never include hi-hat, overheads, or piccolo snare in the mix.

I'll also pan the instruments



"I don't like hearing huge amounts of kick drum or bottom end in my monitors. I like to hear a nicely balanced kit that is well EQ'd with a tight bottom end."

—Virgil Donati

"I want to hear all of the instruments on the stage in my monitors, *except* the drums. I can hear my drum sound acoustically."

—Akira Jimbo

"We all know how hard it is to play and tell the monitor guy what you need."

—Dave Weckl

in my monitor mix. If the guitar is sitting on the right side of the stage, I'll pan it right. I sometimes even pan the bass. If I'm having trouble hearing the bass player when I have him sitting in the center, I may pan it and put a high pass filter on it. Even using the little Mackie mixer, there's enough EQ adjustment to roll off some bottom.

If it gets really loud on stage, sometimes I'll just turn my mixer off. There's no point in fighting it. I'll just turn it off for a song or half a song. Then when you bring the faders back up it sounds much better since your ears have had a chance to rest a little.

Everyone on stage is in my monitor. My attitude is that if you can't hear someone, then how will you know what to play to complement what that person is playing? You may be stepping all over what they're playing if you can't hear them. I notice this with a lot of young bands. They don't look at each other, they can't hear each other, and they don't listen to what the other players are doing. They mostly listen to their own parts, which never change anyway. To me, that's not how to play music.

Many times when I play a club, they'll have a huge monitor cabinet for me that has an 18" sub, a couple of 12"s, and a nice-size horn. The engineer will ask me where I would like it positioned. I tell him to take it over to the corner of the stage, face it away from the stage, and turn it off! Just give me two little wedges. The engineer usually looks at me strangely, like I'm crazy.

I really try to avoid those big cabinets because you're normally dealing with an engineer who's not going to give you what you want, and many things can go wrong. And I don't like to have anything behind the drumkit because, acoustically, it does weird things.

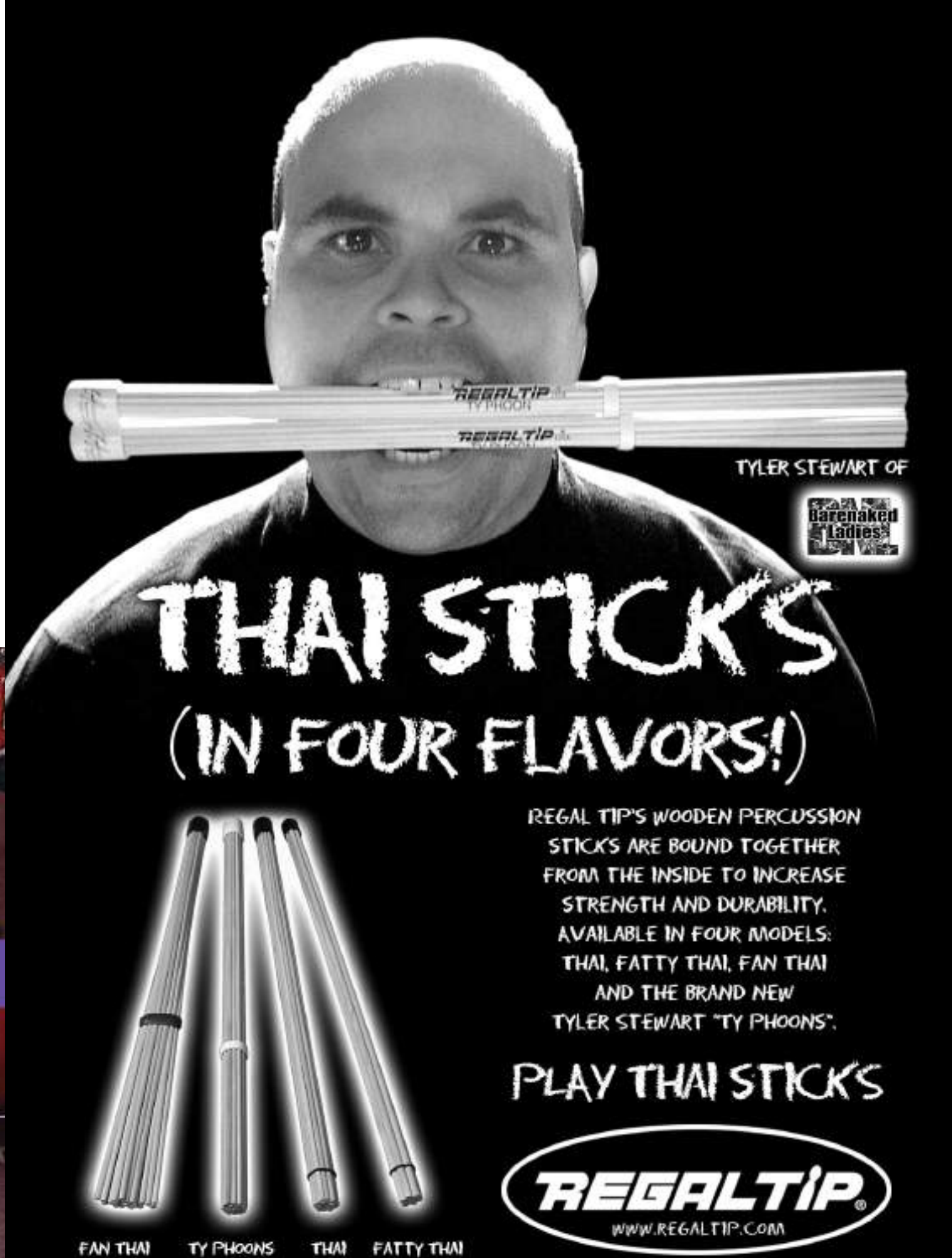
You have to understand that with today's big rock bands, when it comes to a monitoring system for the drummer, they have to gate every single channel. It's so loud, and not tuned well, yet it's *cranked*. If you were to take that gate out, or bypass it, there would be enormous feedback. They can't run a kick drum in the monitors without a gate. It's so funny, when I go to do certain clinics, the engineer will have a whole rack of gates, and they're all inserted and ready to go. The first thing I say to him is, "Take all your inserts and pull them out." Once they hear how nice acoustic drums sound without gates, they're amazed.

It can be very frightening to sit in on another drummer's rig when he's got a huge monitor set up—unless it's a jazz gig. Then you don't have to worry because there won't be any monitors anyway. [laughs]

Billy Ashbaugh
*NSYNC

I'm currently using a set of the Shure E1 in-ear monitors. They do a great job of blocking out the crowd noise—and all of the girls screaming! The in-ears are essential for a gig like mine. I also use a powered seat-shaker device made by a company called Aura. This fifty-watt unit attaches to the bottom of my seat and creates a low-end vibration throughout my seat every time I hit the kick drum. This eliminates the use of a wedge.

With the kick, the trick is getting a good blend between the shaker device and my in-ear monitors. I'll get the attack from my ears and most of the body and presence from the shaker device. This formula has worked great for me so far.



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For my mix, I like to hear the entire band (including vocals) with my drums a little above the entire mix. For my drum mix, I like the entire kit to be in my ears. My goal is to try to take the acoustic level of my kit (what you hear coming from your kit naturally as you sit and play) and reproduce that in my ears. I don't like tons of kick with a touch of snare. A lot of drummers I know like to do that. But to me, that takes the natural blend of the kit and mixes it all up.

I have a click in my in-ears as well. I try to keep it at the lowest level possible. It may sound funny, but for me, it's harder to groove if the click is too loud in the mix. It's almost like I become a slave to it instead of playing *with* it. I gauge this level by setting the click to where it's almost inaudible at the point in the show where the band is at its loudest. Usually I'll be bashing away on half-opened hi-hats, and the energy level is really big at that point.

The only downfall with setting the click level this way is that on a ballad or song where there's a lot of space, the click can seem a little loud in my mix. I have to deal with that, because if I set the level to where it's comfortable for a ballad, then I would *not* be able to hear it when we got to a high-energy spot in the show.

Forrest Robinson

India.Arie

With India, I'm using in-ears for a click reference during songs that I play with the sequencer, while the sequencer itself comes through the wedge. But I generally have a "front-of-house" mix. The in-ear system I use is the Shure E5. I'm running it through a headphone amp.

As far as drums go, I have only my kick drum and just a hint of snare in my wedge. I also have India's guitar and voice just a tad louder than everything else in my wedge. For everything else I do, I prefer to have just an equal overall mix of everything (instruments and vocals) in my monitor, with only kick and a hint of snare as far as the drums go. That's my mix of choice no matter who I perform with.

My monitors are always different, so they vary in size all the time. Sometimes I use two wedges on the floor aiming up towards me, one on my left and one on my right. They have a 12" speaker with a horn. Sometimes I'll have the two that are stacked. The one on the bottom is like a bass bin with a 15" woofer, and the top will normally have two 10" or 12" speakers with a horn. I prefer EV speakers.

Virgil Donati

Planet X

I use regular floor monitors. I haven't tried the molded in-ear monitors, but I've tried the generic ones. I can't really hear a good blend with in-ear monitors. I've got so much of the live drums already coming at me. I prefer the floor speakers. That's the way I've always heard things on stage, and it's most comfortable for me.

I only want to hear a bit of presence with the drums. I don't want them to be overwhelming. I also don't like hearing huge amounts of kick drum or bottom end. I like to hear a nicely balanced kit that is well EQ'd with a tight bottom end. I like just a little snare and sometimes I'll include the toms and hi-hat, depending on the venue. I prefer a small amount of each other instrument on stage. Once again, depending on the venue, I may not have any bass in my monitor because it's right next to me on stage. Since I don't carry my own monitors, I have to rely on what's available for me on each tour. I'm at the mercy of whatever they supply, which are *usually* good-quality cabinets.

Akira Jimbo

Japanese great

I usually use one normal monitor speaker positioned behind me. It depends what kind of speaker the venue has. Sometimes I use two speakers—nothing specific.

In the monitor, though, I want to hear all the instruments on the stage *except* the drums. I can hear my drum sound acoustically. If I put my drum sound in the monitor, I might need more overall level, and loud monitoring is bad for your ears.

If I'm playing alone, using my trigger system, I only monitor the module sound. Usually there's an engineer to control my monitor mix. I haven't tried the in-ear monitors yet. They have a good reputation. I should try them soon.

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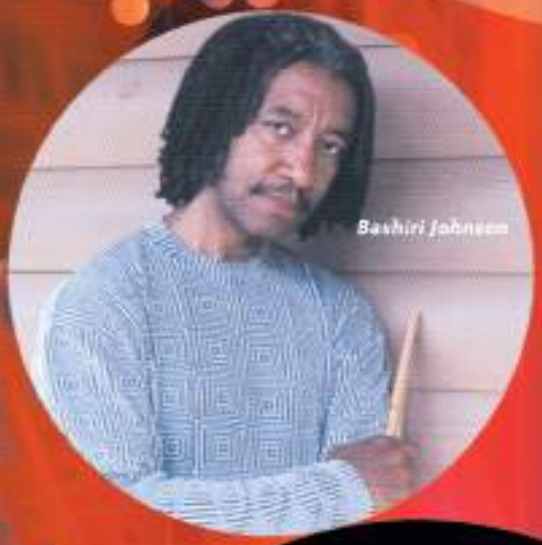

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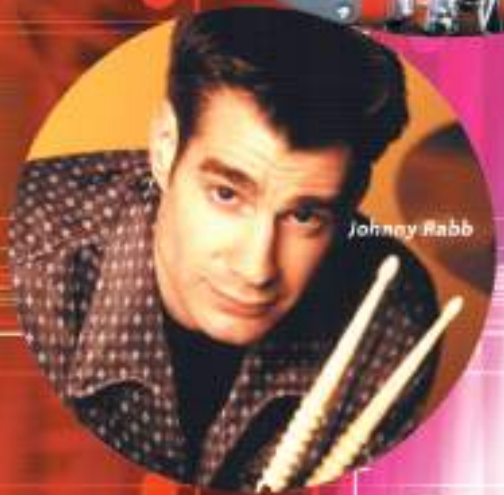

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Dave Weckl
solo artist

This has been a sore spot for me throughout my career, and I am finally now to a point where I've got a system happening that I am very happy with. I will, if I may, present some issues, problems, and fixes that I've learned over the years, and then tell you where it's all ended up, with what I prefer to use now.

For years, I, like many drummers, would just accept what the "professional sound person" at the gig would give me for a monitor mix. I didn't really know what to tell them to make it sound better. I'd say something like, "It sounds like $%^&*. Fix it!" And that isn't really the best way to get results—though sometimes that's what we all feel like saying!

Early on I started taking an interest in sound, the frequencies (pitches) involved, and how they affect all the instruments. (I go into great detail on this topic on my *Natural Evolution* video, *How To Get Your Sound*.) Once you study and understand this aspect, you can ask the monitor engineer to make the adjustments necessary based in "their" language. And you'll gain respect because you'll know a little about what they do. You'll also get a more pleasing mix a lot faster.

One aspect to try to avoid, mostly concerning louder situations, is using only *one* monitor, which is usually positioned to the drummer's left. This is a very dangerous thing to do. I have, and still do occasionally, use only one monitor in softer, acoustic situations when minimal monitoring is required. But if you think about it, it's like listening to headphones with only one ear. It will fatigue one side faster than the other, and possibly damage your hearing. My advice is to always ask for two wedges, in stereo if possible, placed behind and to your left and right sides. But even mono is fine with two speakers. This way you can always hear what's going on no matter which way you turn your head.

In a perfect world, the speaker or speakers you get will sound amazing, already pretuned by the monitor engineer. This is highly unlikely, and only on really professional shows or road acts will you find this to be anywhere near the case. Even in that perfect world, it's still a highly subjective issue, and what sounds good to someone else may not be your idea.

Ideally you would want to play a CD that you are familiar with through those speakers. But if you don't have time for that, just grab the snare mic' and speak through it. The voice is a great way to tune a speaker system in a hurry, easily identifying unnatural tones in your voice. First, however, ask them to flatten the EQ on the snare channel and *take out any high-pass filters*. Monitor engineers love them, because they save their speakers, but your bass drum can sound like a tin can with them—no low end. Reassure them you won't need unusual amounts of low end, and if they *must* use the high pass, ask them to set it as low as possible, like to 40 Hz.

Now is where the frequency study becomes imperative to be able to identify problem areas in the sound. As you start to add things in the mix, usually two things are the most problematic: low-end feedback (generally from 80 to 180 Hz), and harsh high-end midrange (1.5 to 3 K). But of course other frequencies can also be a problem, depending on the circumstances. These are very general numbers, but especially

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concerning the harsh stuff, you'll save your ears if you ask them to lower those frequencies a bit.

If you're getting a boxy, nasal sound, that means there's too much low/mid midrange, generally from 400 to 800 Hz. Again, to really nail this, you need to study a graphic EQ and a pitch instrument to identify the notes on a keyboard, for example, with the numbers on the EQ. There are charts available with this already done, so if you obtain one of these, and you have a feedback problem in your monitor, get your keyboard player to find the note. Then you can use the chart to tell the monitor guy which frequency needs to be lowered.

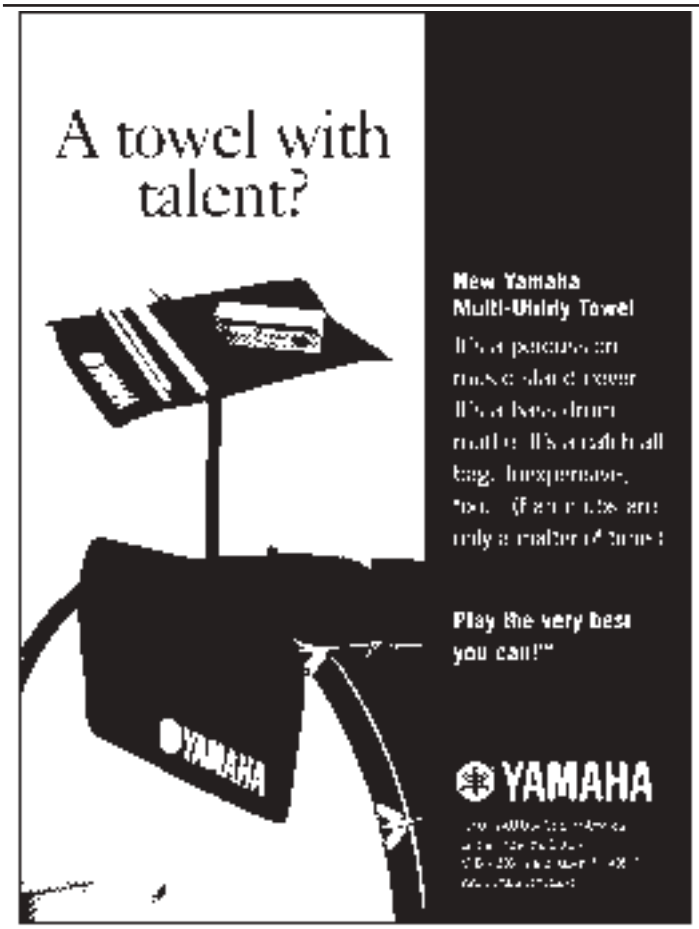
Next is what to get in your mix. I *always* want to hear the drumkit (the whole kit, not just kick and snare!) in the monitors if I am hearing other instruments (again, louder situations). This is for the *fidelity* of the sound of the drums, not so much the volume. But this can be problematic without noise gates for toms or extensive soundchecks, as feedback will most likely occur from the low end of toms ringing. Also, it's unlikely that the monitor desk will be able to give you *all* the drum mic's. They usually don't allow for it in their wiring. In those situations, I ask for kick, snare, and overheads so that the cymbals and toms come through. With just the tom mic's (and no overheads) you'll more than likely end up overplaying (and possibly breaking) your cymbals.

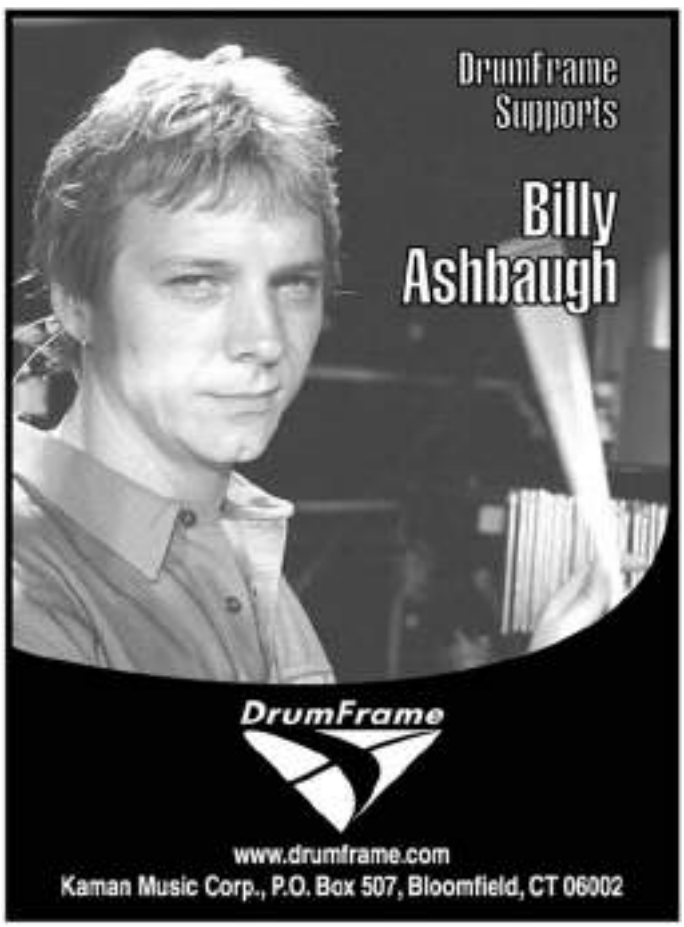
The best scenario is being able to hear everyone on stage, trying to simulate a "mix" (like listening to a CD) as best you can. I found that if other instruments are too loud, though, *you* run the risk of playing too loud. Then the stage becomes a constant parade of everyone turning up their respective amps. Before you know it, the sound on stage is way out of hand. It's always better to start softer and turn things up only if you absolutely have to.

I know that for me, if it's a big group with vocals, I want to key in on the most important things first to have in the mix, like bass, keys, guitar, sequences or loops, etc. Vocals are always set low in my mix, as I don't want the "time" of vocals dictating the pulse, which gives the vocalist more freedom to phrase as they want. Also, if one (or more) member of the group doesn't have strong time, I also have them lower in respect to other, stronger time players.

Now to some realities: If you're like me, you're concerned with protecting your ears. After all, if we go deaf or develop tinnitus, we'll be in trouble. And the problem starts if you wear earplugs. My experience is that the monitor level is much louder than it would be without plugs, adding to the volume war. Plus you really can't "hear" everything properly when you're wearing them. Also, the louder you have the monitors, the more chance the sound from them will go back into your drum mic's, making the front of house mixer's job a nightmare and creating all kinds of phase and other problems. So what to do?

My solution is using in-ear monitors. (I use Shure's wired system.) The in-ear system has a pre-amp box, with volume and other adjustments, including a limiter. When someone else is sending the mix to your head, you *need* this for safety reasons in case of spikes of unwanted decibels. The in-ear system also acts like earplugs, muffling the sound from the outside. So you get the protection of plugs, but with "headphone" capability. And since the outside sound is greatly reduced, it's not necessary to listen at a loud volume.





Sound Advice

Since I'm still concerned with the drum *sound* on stage, I still ask for stereo monitor wedges. But only the drums come through them. That way, fidelity-wise, I'm in the same arena as the other instruments with "systems" on stage. It's not loud, just there, with a little low-end enhancement and reverb as desired.

There is one possible drawback with in-ear systems: lack of low end. A lot of drummers combat this with the vibrating speaker under the drum throne. Although this may satisfy *you*, it's not real low end realized by anyone else on stage, and the drums will not be amplified, thus sounding acoustic against other electric instruments. I actually started carrying my own system around twenty years ago to battle this issue.

For the in-ear mix, I get everything, including *all* the drums, for that "live CD" sound. But even with this system you're still at the mercy of someone else "mixing" your sound, and we all know how hard it is to play and tell the monitor guy what you need. So I take it a step further and put myself in complete control of all of this. This may not be doable in all situations, as the setup is involved. I'm referring to having your own mixer and mic's as part of *your* setup. (Again, I go into detail on this in the video mentioned earlier.)

My drum setup includes a Yamaha 01v digital mixer (so one unit houses all processing and recall of presets for different songs), Shure microphones, and my own snake of cabling, so I'm completely contained and in control. With my own band, I even mix the drums for the front of house (with help from the house engineer to get balances correct), and just send a stereo mix out, which in turn comes back to my wedges. (Even one wedge directly behind you will work with this setup, but ask for 15" minimum for the low end.)

For gigs where I'm a sideman, I show up with the same system, but with small splitter cables so if the house person insists on more control I can give it to them. These splitter cables also work great for splitting mic' signals of vocals, guitar amps, etc., right at the mic' or input, so that these mic's can go to me and the house separately. That way I have control over these other instruments as well as my individual drum mic's.

On larger gigs, I may still need the monitor person to send me a stereo mix of a few things if I am short of inputs, which has happened before. So again I choose the least important things for me to hear to go in that mix. The mixer has the capability to send out three different stereo mixes, so I send one for the house/monitors and one for *my* in-ear mix. I even give my keyboard player, Steve Weingart, his own mix from that same mixer, as he wears in-ears as well.

One important thing, however, is to get the balance *without* the plugs in first, with the wedges on. Get the band to be balanced on stage. Then you can realize the "pressure" you're playing with in relationship to your dynamics with the other players. Then put the in-ears in and try to assume that same mix and playing pressure. I say this because it's easy to be in your own little world in there and play dynamically incorrect if you're not aware of this issue.

It takes a little more time to set up and a few more cases to carry, but in the end it's *very* worth it. I find it's the only way to be really satisfied with what I'm hearing. With each performance being consistent sound-wise, I can concentrate on the music, which is what we need to be concentrating on.

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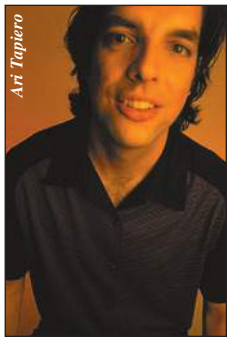
Tom Bona



Canadian drummer Tom Bona has a lofty career goal: "To play drums in every country, on every continent, for every person on this earth." Tom started young, playing on a four-piece Sears Silvertone kit that his dad bought for his mom. Of course, Tom immediately commandeered it, and by fourteen he was on the road with his uncle's professional band.

Studying jazz percussion in college shaped Tom's drumming philosophy: Play simply and dynamically, with conviction and a good groove—and leave plenty of room for the vocalist or soloist. "The less I play, the more work I get," he says. His drumming heroes include Jeff Porcaro, Vinnie Colaiuta, Fred Below, Al Jackson Jr., Zigaboo Modeliste, Pat Mastelotto, Brian MacLeod, and Mike Urbano.

For several years Tom has been playing with award-winning blues-roots guitarist Sue Foley (www.suefoley.com), and he's on her latest CD, *Where The Action Is*. They've opened for a host of stellar blues and R&B artists, and have played festivals throughout the USA, Canada, and Europe.

Tom is also a member of Raoul & The Big Time (www.raoulandthebigtime.com), a Toronto-based Chicago blues/West Coast swing band. In 1999 the band won a Maple Blues Award (Canada's equivalent of the W.C. Handy Award) as "Best New Artist." In 2001 Tom himself won the Maple Blues Award for "Drummer Of The Year" for his work with Sue Foley and Raoul & The Big Time.

Tom has appeared on numerous Canadian television and radio programs, as well as on America's National Public Radio show *Mountain Stage* with Clarence Gatemouth Brown and Chris Smither. When he finds time, Tom works on his songwriting and piano playing and adds to his collection of vintage gear.

Joe Murphy

In his twenty-year drumming career, Joe Murphy has studied, performed, and taught many different musical styles. His educational background includes Berklee College of Music, along with private studies under Gary Chaffee, Bob Gulotti, Joe Porcaro, Kenny Aronoff, and Dom Famularo. He also cites influences like David Garibaldi, Jeff Porcaro, Elvin Jones, Kenny Aronoff, and Larrie Londin.

Joe resides in Tampa, Florida. He plays regularly in Tampa, Orlando, Ft. Lauderdale, and Miami, as well as occasional gigs in the Midwest. Joe is also busy as a studio drummer, and has performed on projects in Boston, LA, Cincinnati, and Tampa. One such project is Stem, a funk/fusion band featuring bassist Felix Pastorius (son of bass legend Jaco Pastorius). Another is Starbaby, a pop/funk project produced by Dito Godwin (No Doubt, Mötley Crüe). Joe's playing on demos by these groups reveals a drumming style that's technically adept and musically appropriate at all times. He performs on Yamaha drums and Paiste cymbals, and is an Aquarian drumhead endorser.

Joe is also a busy teacher at AJ's Pro Percussion in Tampa, where he maintains a roster of over forty students. In February of this year, Joe, co-teacher David Dix, and a small group of students were invited to perform at the Florida Percussive Arts Society convention, where they performed with Dom Famularo. "My teaching goal," says Joe, "is to spread the wealth of drumming knowledge to the next generation of up-and-coming drummers."

T. Motts

Born in Brooklyn and "raised on rock," T. Motts was exposed to the likes of Keith Moon and John Bonham at an early age. Along with those British giants, T. also cites New York rock legends Carmine Appice and Rod Morgenstein as influences, along with Joey Kramer, Tommy Lee, Dave Grohl, and Ian Paice.

In recent years, T. says he "played the part of a hired gun," drumming all over the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut area in modern rock, blues/rock, alternative, and classic rock cover bands. But in 1998 he joined an original rock act called Atello, shortly after the release of their debut CD, *The Big Payoff*. The album brought the band positive press in *Billboard* and *Metal Edge*, along with a heavy international following and a UK-based fan club. They opened for groups like Ratt, Firehouse, Mr. Big, and Lynch Mob, then went back into the studio to record their sophomore CD, *Welcome To The Wrecking Ball*, on which T. contributed as both drummer and writer. Described as "a collection of pure rock songs that combine elements of the '70s, '80s, and early '90s, the CD amply displays T.'s solid and dynamic rock styling. Check it out at www.atello.com.

T. plays a double-bass Ludwig Super Classic kit with a deep snare, along with Zildjian cymbals. He's also restoring a '70s-era Vistalite kit to use on future performances, as Atello hits the road in the US and in Europe this year.

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

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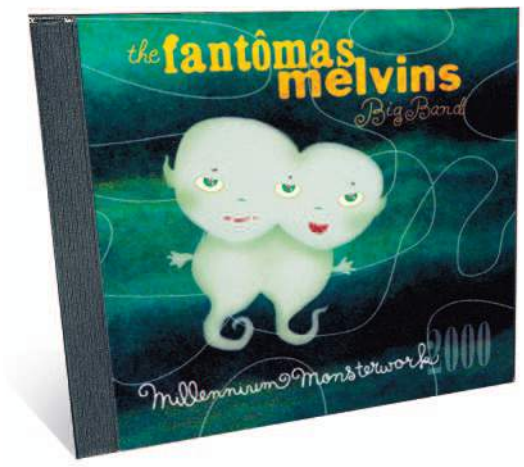


8 The Melvins Hostile Ambient Takeover (Ipecac)

Too bad the word *grunge* has such a stigma after all that early-'90s business, 'cause it's perfect for the Melvins, whose thick, greasy riffs threaten to coat your speakers with slime. Nearing their 20th anniversary—and long after many of their more famous Seattle-area protégés have crumbled—the trio is still browbeating listeners with hard, dizzying grooves and spit-in-your-face 'tude. **DALE CROVER**'s charismatic thud thrives on *Hostile Ambient Takeover*, which is like a grab bag of Melvin-y delights. Dale's huge, heavy beats can be so achingly slow that they make the mid-tempo, punk-meets-rockabilly stuff feel fast.

6 The Fantomas Melvins Big Band Millennial Monsterwork (Ipecac)

Not for the fainthearted is this hell-raising live collaboration between The Melvins and Fantomas. (In fact, it makes the whacked-out *Hostile Ambient Takeover* seem almost mainstream.) Fantomas's cut & paste style dominates, as **Mike Patton** alternately shrieks and croons. But often the bands meet halfway. Much of the fun is in the merging of **DALE CROVER** and **DAVE LOMBARDO**'s seemingly incompatible styles. Sure, they're both anvil-heavy, but Lombardo likes digging into fleet-footed double bass while Crover is like a 45-rpm record slowed down to $33\frac{1}{3}$. They don't actually play together as much as you'd like, but each drags out some good, nasty rhythms. **Michael Parillo**

9 Bill Bruford's Earthworks Footloose And Fancy Free (DGM)

It all converges here for **BILL BRUFORD**. Earthworks' acoustic jazz is informed by the drummer's prog-rock/fusion past, spinning out long, unusual extended forms and, of course, tantalizing odd meters. On this live London date, the sax/piano/bass/drums unit hits a new peak, breathing together, mutually sculpting the complex tunes. And it's brilliant how Bruford is so aggressively commanding and interactively yielding at the same time. He sounds even *more* individualistic without electronics. The double CD will also have a companion DVD release, *Footloose In NYC*, featuring another live date. Bruford, it seems, never stops growing. **Jeff**

8 Vanessa Carlton Be Not Nobody (A&M)

ABE LABORIEL JR. lives up to his reputation as everyone's favorite new hired gun on classical/pop pianist Vanessa Carlton's debut. Throughout the Sting–, Fiona Apple–, and Bruce Hornsby–influenced *Be Not Nobody*, Abe drives the singer-songwriter exactly where she wants the listener to go. Even on softer tunes, Abe plays every beat with balls and conviction; each note is heartfelt. Standout drum tracks "Unsung," "Prince," "A Thousand Miles," and a cover of the Stones' "Paint It Black" help make this an excellent debut, with real music and real drums played by one of the best. **Billy Amendola**

7 Hands On'Semble Shradhanjali (independent)

This second release by Hands On'Semble, a quartet devoted to the art of hand drumming, features nine tunes performed on a plethora of instruments from around the world. The four performers, **JOHN BERGAMO**, **RANDY GLOSS**, **ANDREW GRUESCHOW**, and **AUSTIN WRINKLE**, are either faculty or alumni of the California Institute Of The Arts. Improvisation, pulsating rhythms, and unusual instrument combinations abound. "Improv With Ed" features **ED MANN** on the Densmorephone, made by **John Densmore** of the Doors. After hearing all the exotic sounds these players produce, listeners may wish for a live performance to see how they do it! (www.handsonsemble.com) **Andrea Byrd**

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES

Weather Report and Traffic

Capturing Weather Report's early ascendance, three newly reissued classic albums see the band reveling in their innovative blend of world music–infused, jazz-rich, rock-styled brilliance. *Mysterious Traveler* (1974) is laced with quicksilver. Drummers **SKIP HADDEN** and **ISHMAEL WASHBURN**'s airy grooves are offset by intense melodies and **Alphonso Johnson**'s lush bass. *Tale Spinnin'* (1975) introduced funk to the mix, courtesy **LEON "NDUGU" CHANCLER**. Though sloppy by today's standards, Ndugu adds real soul to WR's ethereal tones. *Black Market* (1976) is outstanding and essential, the perfect matching of **Jaco Pastorious**'s passionate bass bluster with **NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN**'s sprite-like fury and **CHESTER THOMPSON**'s thick groove-slab. Unreleased tracks would have made these reissues more valuable, but the music stands. (Legacy)

Across the Atlantic, **JIM GORDON** had taken a break from Derek & The Dominos to record with British psychedelic jazz-pop band Traffic. Loose and punchy, the later version of Traffic that recorded the live, transitional *Welcome To The Canteen* and the monumental *Low Spark Of High Heeled Boys* (both 1971) delved into near free-rock improvisation, simmering over trippy hippy terrain. Gordon's cymbal beat is like the wind, smooth and caressing, and when the music heats up, his white-boy funk is dark and majestic. Well before Steve Gadd, Gordon epitomized the sensitive, highly skilled drummer, able to burn on jazz, pop, and soul with a passionate pulse. His solo album, *Hogfat*, remains sadly out of print. (Island) **Ken Micallef**

rating scale

poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 classic

HEAVYOSITY

8 Soilwork Natural Born Chaos (Nuclear Blast)

With their combination of fast thrash, driving mid tempos, and melodic hooks that leave you humming, Soilwork is a band to listen up for. **HENRY RANTA**'s drumming is integral throughout, whether it's pushing an aggressive verse or an open driving four through a chorus. Filled with strong writing, here is aggressive music with some neat ideas.

7 Decapitated Nihility (Earache)

Rapid, intricate patterns are a standout feature of **VITEK**'s style, as he keeps things moving with this technical death metal band. Blast beats stop on a dime in "Perfect Dehumanization," and complex patterns open up to space for contrast. With precision playing built off the riffs, Vitek builds interest rather than relying on cliché. A blistering example of what death metal can be.

6 December The Lament Configuration (Earache)

December is an extreme metal band that plays aggressively with a punishing sound. **JASON THOMAS**'s drumming covers a lot of ground, as he plays through 4/4 grooves and odd times with blast beats and breaks. There are some good moments here, but the production seems almost extreme for extreme's sake, resulting in a tough listen. **Martin Patmos**

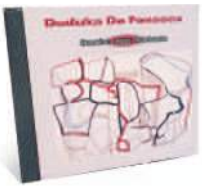
8 Burnt By The Sun Soundtrack To The Personal Revolution (Relapse)

Many bands combine metal, hardcore punk, and noise rock, yet too many end up with a big, sloppy mess. Not Burnt By The Sun, whose deft approach yields inventive results on their first full-length. If any group can pummel your eardrums into wonderful submission, it's BBTS. But it's how they augment their scorching attack with artful arrangements and cool sociopolitical wordplay that makes them so appealing. And keeping things especially intriguing is **DAVID WITTE**, with well-placed fills, humongous power, and a talent for juggling numerous time signatures. **Jeff Perlah**

6 Echobrain Echobrain (Chophouse)

Here's one for all you "serve the song" drummers out there. Depending on your disposition, you'll either be refreshed or disappointed with the new home of **Jason Newsted**, former bassist of Metallica. Echobrain hints at grunge and melody-driven bands like Radiohead and Foo Fighters, and **BRIAN SAGRAFENA** dutifully traverses all the directions this powerful pop trio takes. Without a lot of fills or flash, Brian does his best to get the job done. Most of the "work," though, is handled by **Dylan Donkin**'s strong vocal phrasings. Still, Jason and Brian lock in hard to make it come together. **Sean Enright**

8 Duduka Da Fonseca Samba Jazz Fantasia (Malandro)



On his solo debut, ace Brazilian jazz drummer Da Fonseca sports his sublime taste, rolling dynamics-within-dynamics, and concise, joyful grooving. His popping samba brushwork is particularly enthralling. Duduka shines in varied formats, from a berimbau solo to sax-fronted septet. There's plenty of guest star power, including members of his long-time group, Trio Da Paz. (Seek out their new release, *Café*.) Influences include early '70s samba/jazz fusion as well as bossa and bop, but the binding force is a positive lyricism. And check out the 15/8 partido alto groove; in Duduka's hands, it feels like a carefree dance beat. (www.brazilianjazz.com) **Jeff Potter**

6 Phantom Planet The Guest (Epic/Daylight)

The bouncy power-pop of Phantom Planet's second album isn't all that innovative or groundbreaking. But like their mentors The Knack and Cheap Trick, the Planet execute a respectable collection of tracks that are well arranged and hook-laden. Actor, co-songwriter, and drummer **JASON SCHWARTZMAN** maintains control with his straightforward timekeeping, á la Stan Lynch or Charlie Watts. "Hey Now Girl" sports a fun, upbeat open hat groove while "Nobody's Fault" locks into a head-bobbing, quarter-note drive. There aren't many tricks to be found on *The Guest*—just an honest, competent dose of rock drumming. **Waleed Rashidi**

8 Anton Fig Figments (Planula)

With his first solo effort, *Figments,* **ANTON FIG** has made a record *everyone*—not just drummers—can listen to and appreciate. But that doesn't mean he forgets to show off his drum chops (and multi-instrumental chops, and songwriting chops, and producing chops…). Whether traveling back to his hometown in South Africa with smooth odd-time signatures, or rocking heavy and slow with Skid Row singer **Sebastian Bach** and KISS guitarist **Ace Frehley**, Anton delivers the goods. Other special guests help make this record diverse and accessible. Along with diggin' the drums, you may even find yourself singing along. (www.antonfig.com) **Billy Amendola**

5 Six Drumsets Simmer (Hourglass)

We've got six fine drummers here, no question. The rub is their notoriously elusive goal. Their grail is to spotlight the subtleties of the kit, to explore texture and color in long-unfolding improvisations, embracing a "simmer" rather than a full boil. Translating multi-percussion ensembles to disc is historically daunting. The group M'Boom prevailed through an expansive palette and tight composition. But the drummers here (**MARKO DJORDJEVIC**, **TAKESHI ICHIKAWA**, **JON HAZILLA**, **JOHNNY RABB**, **JOHAN SVENSSON**, and **STEVE WILKES**) are flirting with a more unforgiving format. There's much to admire in the Six's touch and elegant feel, but they fall short in sustaining direction for the CD's full length. (www.sixdrumsets.com)

Joshua Parker

8 Face To Face How To Ruin Everything (Vagrant)

After nearly a decade performing their signature semi-melodic punk that's influenced thousands (including Blink-182's Travis Barker), Southern California's Face To Face continue to confidently stroll along their established, distinguishable path. (They've deviated only once: 1999's horrid *Ignorance Is Bliss*.) Drummer **PETE PARADA**'s notable contributions include the rapid-fire snare 16ths on "14 Hours" and the creative tom work on "Why Would I Lie?" Parada's gutsy slams and forceful crashes are not unlike that of Barker. And it's his precise slugging that'll affirm him as an influence on punk drummers in the years to come.

Waleed Rashidi

LIGHTING THE FUSE

8 Vital Information Show 'Em Where You Live (Intuition)

Master drummer **STEVE SMITH**'s solid musical chops are at peak performance here. Steve's acoustic kit sounds beautifully organic whether in swing, boogaloo, funk, fusion, or shuffle mode. Smith's technical drumming advances are subtly understated, showing polished maturity and style.

6 Ken Serio Eye To Eye (independent)

KEN SERIO's instrumental project features impressive chops and good (if unbalanced) acoustic drum tones. Highlights include two stereo-panned drum duets with **DANNY GOTTLIEB**. Serio has blazing hand speed and high-energy jazz chops. Unfortunately, the experimental material verges too often on overkill. (www.trippingtree.com)

8 Bela Fleck & The Flecktones Live At The Quick (Columbia)

This high-spirited live set from one of today's most unusual instrumental groups features virtuoso guests adding exciting foreign flavors to Fleck's "Americana fusion." **FUTURE MAN**'s unique Synth-Axe Drumitar adds subtler textures than the sharper tones of acoustic drums. Purists may object, but you can't argue with success.

Mike Haid

BOOKS

8 Bass Drum Essentials For The Drumset by Dave Black and Brian Fullen (Alfred)

level: intermediate to advanced, $19.95 (with CD)

The lonely bass drum is often neglected in kit studies. This 88-page tutorial aims to change all that. The author's goals include developing your skill in coordinating the hands and feet, while reinforcing essential aspects of playing, such as locking in with the bass player, providing a strong foundation, and working together with the rest of the rhythm section. This book's thoroughness is reflected immediately, as topics like throne height, pedal tension, heel-up/heel-down technique, hi-hat fundamentals, and general practice tips are all covered—in the introduction!

The lessons start off with simple 8th-note patterns for the bass drum and move immediately into snare drum work and sticking accents for the hi-hat. Next are bass, snare, and ride exercises, which are followed by tom work and fills. Once you've mastered the basics, the *real* shedding begins, with 16th-note strengthening exercises designed to be played with the included CD click tracks, as well as groove exercises spanning samba to the rock ballad. Get out your workout clothes for this one.

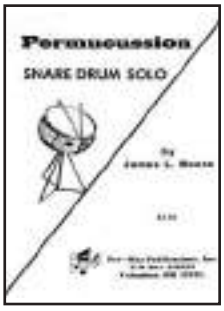
Fran Azzarto

6 Good N' Easy Snare Drum Solos by James L. Moore (Per-Mus)

level: beginner, $8.95

6 Permucussion Snare Drum Solo by James L. Moore (Per-Mus)

level: beginner to intermediate, $3.50



Good N' Easy is a collection of twenty-four one-page snare drum solos that progress from quarter and 8th notes to 16th notes, rolls, and flams. These solos can be used in conjunction with any snare drum method book to apply the techniques learned in a real musical setting. Tempos and stickings are not given so that a variety may be used (alternate sticking, right-hand lead, rudimental orientation, etc.). These simple solos would also be good sightreading material for drummers wanting to work on their "musical chops."

Permucussion, originally published in 1966, has been re-released by Per-Mus. This two-page snare drum solo starts in a Dixieland feel before accelerating to a fast driving rhythm, incorporating many of the basic rudiments (rolls, flams, drags, ratamacues, etc.) and *lots* of dynamics. A bit more of a challenge for beginner to intermediate drummers. (P.O. Box 218333, Columbus, OH 43221)

Andrea Byrd

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International Drum Festivals

Early spring was a busy time for the drumming industry when it came to major clinics and drum events. March saw two in Germany, April saw one in Nova Scotia, and May featured the Modern Drummer Festival Weekend (which will receive feature coverage in next month's *MD*.)

Drum Day In Hannover

Text and photos by Heinz Kronberger

On Saturday, March 23, PPC, one of Germany's largest music retailers, sponsored the first Drum Day in Hannover. Nearly nine hundred avid drumming fans gathered to enjoy performances by Simon Phillips, Thomas Lang, Jose Cortijo, Bernard Purdie, and Bertram Engel. The show featured lots of good grooves and great entertainment on the drums. Simon headlined the day, just off an extensive German clinic tour for Tama. He played some of his solo material, as well as some Toto songs.

Simon Phillips

Bertram Engel

Bernard Purdie

Tribute To Jeff Porcaro In Koblenz

Text and photos by Heinz Kronberger

The Koblenz Drums & Sounds Festival has been a major European drumming event for several years. But this year's show was special, since its theme was "A Tribute To Jeff Porcaro." Two thousand people attended the two-day event over the Easter weekend.

Clinicians/performers included Ed Thigpen, Dirk Brand, Michael Schack, Wolfgang Haffner, Jim Chapin, Rene Creemers & Wim DeVries, John "JR" Robinson with his band (with Luis Conte on percussion), Bernard Purdie, Zoro, Thomas Lang, and Italian drummer Maxx Furian. They all performed in support of the Jeff Porcaro Tribute Band, who did two concerts during the weekend. Keyboardist/musical director David Garfield created arrangements for many songs that Jeff had played drums on in his career.

The rest of the band was a who's who of the LA studio scene, including musicians like Joe Porcaro, Steve Gadd, Robin DiMaggio, Gregg Bissonette, Lenny Castro, Chase Duddy (a nephew of Jeff), Mike Porcaro on bass, Steve Porcaro on keys, Mike O'Neill on guitar, Larry Klimas on saxophone, German trumpeter Ernst Mosch, and Bobby Kimball, Alex Ligertwood, and Glenn Hughes on vocals. With talent of that level playing West Coast music from the '70s and '80s, you can't go wrong.

Jeff's presence was especially felt when his drum video was played during a break in the action. In addition, a huge poster of Jeff hanging over the stage gave everyone the feeling that he was watching and enjoying the proceedings. Thanks to Jürgen Mader and his staff for their two years of hard work in bringing this tribute to Jeff Porcaro together.

Jeff Porcaro Tribute

Steve Gadd

John "JR" Robinson

Gregg Bissonette

Lenny Castro and Robin DiMaggio

Luis Conte

Thomas Lang

Ed Thigpen

Joe and Mike Porcaro

Cape Breton Drum Fest

Text and photos by Jim Cornall

The Second Annual Cape Breton International Drum Festival was held at the University College of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, Canada on April 27 and 28. Hundreds of drummers traveled from all parts of Canada and New England to enjoy performances by several international percussion performers.

The Drum Fest is coordinated and co-hosted by drum teacher and local recording artist Bruce Aitken. The other co-host was Terry Ryan (manager of Musicstop, the major sponsor of the event). The format included a trade show, autograph sessions, and, of course, the performances themselves.

Things got started with a local feel when the Louisbourg Drum Troupe played their way into the theatre, decked in traditional historical costumes. They were followed by Zoro, whose clinic was titled "The History Of Funk In Music." He played along to gospel, funk, Cajun, and pop songs, delighting the crowd, who were all clapping along in time with the beats he laid down to songs such as The Meters' "Hey Pockey Way" and James Brown's "Cold Sweat."

Toronto drummer Jeff Salem amused the audience with stories, stressing that everyone has to travel the same road, and that everyone is constantly learning. Following a demonstration of basic rudiments on a practice pad, Jeff performed a blistering solo that highlighted his versatility.

Cape Breton drummers Ethan Ardelli and Shaun Parris played along with other local musicians to showcase their rising talents. The Kitpu Singers, a First Nations group, added to the diversity with their electrifying drumming, native songs, and chanting. Bruce Aitken himself then played with a local band, taking lead vocals while he pounded along to The Beatles' "Taxman."

Newfoundland freelancer Sonny Hogan played to tracks ranging from blues to Celtic to rock. He spoke of the need to hold it down and not be too flashy, and how to deal with mistakes: "When you make a mistake, do the same thing next time around!" His laid-back approach delighted the crowd.

Closing the first day, jazz veteran Paul Wertico held the crowd totally captive with an improvised solo that had it all. Slow, floating passages were followed by powerful sections that emphasized Paul's assertion that there really is no right or wrong way to play. "It's not about the notes," he said. "How am I expressing my *feelings* to the audience?" Before leaving, Paul played a track from his forthcoming CD, lifting the crowd in the packed theatre to their feet with the invention, feel, and versatility of his playing.

Ontario blues drummer and bandleader Maureen Brown

Louisbourg Drum Troupe

Zoro

Bruce Aitken

Kitpu

brought two new perspectives to her opening performance on Sunday: that of a female drummer and that of a singing drummer. Maureen challenged every drummer to go home and sing a song while they drummed, not only to gain an appreciation of how difficult it is, but also to see how the drummer fits in with the band.

Then it was all change again as Darren Schoepp, Roland Canada's product specialist, showed off the V-Drums. Even the purists were shaking their heads at some of the things this kit could do.

Mexican music professor Evaristo Aguilar held the audience spellbound with his own compositions for drums, combining cumbia music from Colombia and huasteca rhythms from Mexico. These patterns were not only beautiful and complex, but also very adaptable to pop and rock music.

Wilson Laurencin is the drummer for the house band on *Open Mike With Mike Bullard* (Canada's answer to Jay Leno). He played to tracks, then talked to the audience about playing on the show and how he got there, from Drummers Collective in New York City, to bars in Toronto, to drumming for artists including Burton Cummings and Richard Marx.

Dom Famularo had the crowd eating out of his hands as he told hilarious and moving stories, asked questions, and inspired and motivated every person in attendance. And then he played. Each time he finished a solo that included humor, power, delicacy, and incredible speed, the crowd rose to cheer.

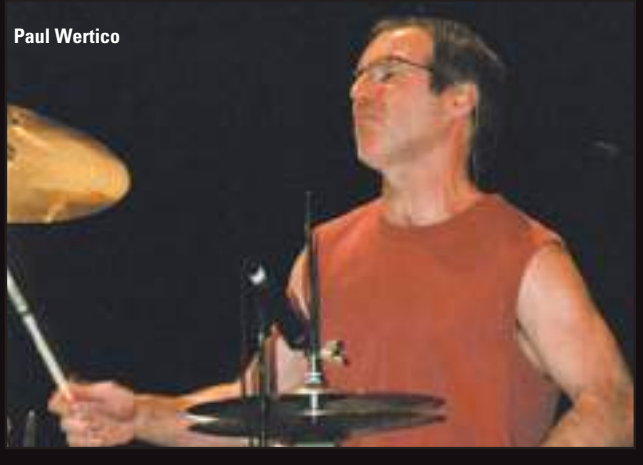
Any drummer would find it tough to follow Dom. But with credits including Santana, Traffic, Joe Sample, Gloria Estefan, and Donna Summer, Walfredo Reyes Jr. isn't just any drummer. First playing an incredible solo using congas, shakers, cabasa, agogo bells—and the floor—Wally proved that *everything* can be percussion in the right hands. Then he stepped behind the drumkit and promptly demonstrated why he's one of the most respected drummers around.

For the show's finale, all of the drummers (save Wertico, who had to leave early) joined in a snare-drum ensemble led by Dom Famularo. The enthusiastic finale displayed the talent, humor, and pure love of drumming possessed by each of the Drum Fest participants.

Sponsors for the Cape Breton Drum Fest included Musicstop, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, Tamaulipas University, Delta Sydney, University College of Cape Breton, Cape Breton Regional Municipality Recreation Department, Lantz Electronics Ltd., Coda, Brennan's Travel Agency Ltd., Colonial Honda, Cape Breton Yacht Club, LaerWork, Island Folklore, and HeadQuarters.

Wilson Laurencin

Evaristo Aguilar

Walfredo Reyes Jr.

Paul Wertico

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MD Giveaway Winners

Modern Drummer Publications is pleased to announce the winners of over $16,000 in prizes from **Canopus**, **Wuhan**, **Action**, **Beato**, **Groove Juice**, and **Grip Peddler**. The contest ran in the February, March, and April 2002 issues of *MD*.

First prize consisted of a six-piece Canopus Classic drumkit, a set of Wuhan cymbals, Action stands, pedals, and throne, a set of Beato bags, six bottles each of Groove Juice Cymbal Cleaner and Shell Shine, and a set of Grip Peddler bass drum and hi-hat pad 4-packs. Also included from Canopus were two extra snare wire sets, a set of Bolt Tight lug washers, and a tuning key holder. The prize, whose retail value is over $7,600, went to **Dave Tedeschi** from Green Bay, Wisconsin.

The second-prize package included a four-piece Canopus Club drumkit, Wuhan cymbals, Action stands, pedals, and throne, Beato bags, Groove Juice Cymbal Cleaner and Shell Shine, and Grip Peddler bass drum and hi-hat pads, plus two extra Canopus snare wire sets, Bolt Tight lug washers, and a tuning key holder. The winner of this $5,200 prize is **Matt Fox** of Valparaiso, Indiana.

Ten third-prize packages included a set of Canopus Bolt Tight lug washers, two Canopus snare wire sets, a tuning key holder, a Beato Bumper pad and dust cover, six bottles each of Groove Juice Cymbal Cleaner and Shell Shine, and a set of Grip Peddler bass drum and hi-hat pad 4-packs—all valued at over $290. The ten winners are: **John Broz**, **Tom DeVinko**, **Chris Fryar**, **Kathy Goff**, **Nick Hester**, **Mark Jowyk**, **Michael Rojek**, **Edward Shaull-Thompson**, **David Stavron**, and **William Tamison**.

Congratulations to all of the winners from Canopus, Wuhan, Action, Beato, Groove Juice, Grip Peddler, and *Modern Drummer*.

QUICK BEATS

RICHIE MORALES (SESSION GREAT)

What are some of your favorite grooves?
Elvin Jones on "Mr. Knight" (John Coltrane), Vernell Fournier on "Poinciana" (Ahmad Jamal), Buddy Miles on "Rainy Day Dream Away" (Jimi Hendrix), Travis Barker on "Stay Together For The Kids" (Blink-182), Ahmir Thompson on "Playa Playa" (D'Angelo), and Billy Cobham on "The Pleasant Pheasant" from *Crosswinds*.

What do you listen to in your car, and what car are you driving?
Karizma's *Document*, James Brown's *Greatest Hits*, Tony Williams' *Native Heart*, Weather Report's *Black Market*, D'Angelo's *Voodoo*, ZZ Top's *XXX*, and Tool's *Lateralus*. I drive a 2001 Subaru Outback Wagon.

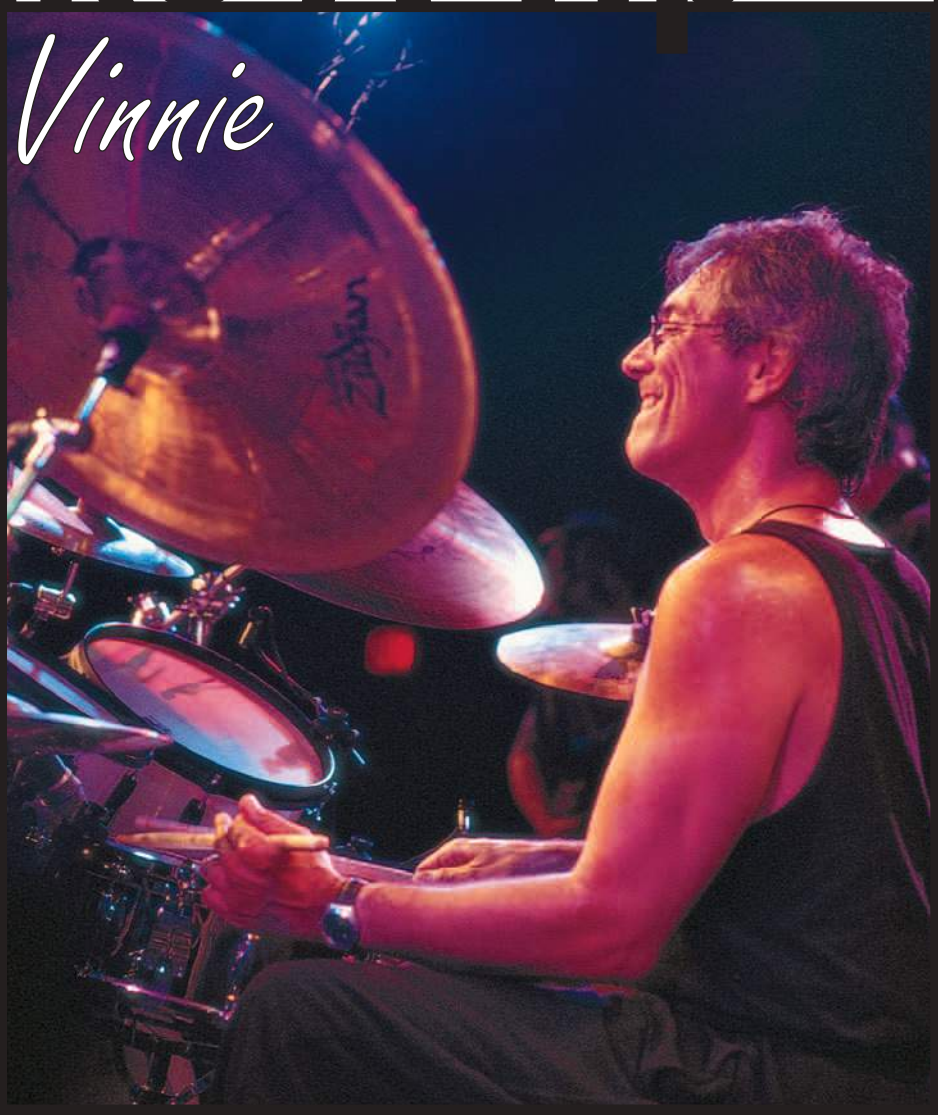
If you could put an imaginary super band together, who would be in it?
If *I* were drumming, it would be the Brecker brothers on horns, Larry Young on organ, Jimi Hendrix on guitar, Don Alias on percussion, and Marcus Miller and Jaco Pastorius on bass. If I wasn't on drums, then I'd like a "cyborg mix" of Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Clyde Stubblefield.

Take A Tip

From Vinnie

"*Modern Drummer* is the Library Of Congress for drummers. I've got my card. Do you have yours?"

— Vinnie Colaiuta



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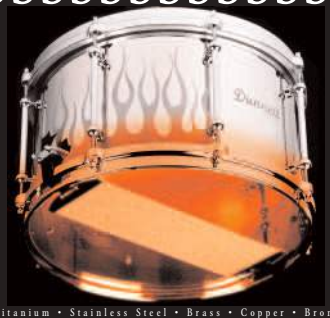

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ADVERTISER	WEB ADDRESS	PAGE NUMBER
Advance Drum Decals	www.drumdecals.com	23
Ahead Drumsticks	www.bigbangdist.com	95
AJ's Pro Percussion	www.ajpropercussion.com	141
Aquarian Drumheads	www.aquariandrumheads.com	139
Arbiter Drums	www.arbiterdrums.com	96
Atlanta Pro Percussion	www.atlantapropercussion.com	118
Attack Drumheads	www.universalpercussion.com	99
Audix	www.audixusa.com	125
Auralex Acoustics	www.auralex.com	170
Axis Percussion	www.axispercussion.com	24
Beato	www.beatobags.com	16
Bosphorus Cymbals	www.bosphoruscymbal.com	35
Cadeson Drums	www.cadesonmusic.com	82
Canopus Drums	www.canopusdrums.com	20
CLE Drums	www.cledrums.com	168
ClearSonic	www.clearsonic.com	175
D'Amico	www.damicodrums.com	152
Doug Tann	www.dreamwater.net/dougtann	152
Drum Center of Lexington		154
Drum Doctors	www.drumdoctors.com	64
Drum Germs	www.drumgerms.com	169
Drum Perfect	www.drumperfect.com	169
Drum Solo	www.drumsolo.cc	170
Drum Supply House	www.drummaker.com	152
Drum Workshop (DW)	www.dwdrums.com	17,121
Drum World	www.drumworld.com	66
Drumat	www.drumat.com	171
Drumcover.com	www.drumcover.com	154
DrumFrame	www.drumframe.com	153
Drumfun	www.drumfun.com	169
Drummers Collective	www.thecollectivenyc.com	76
Drumrack.com	www.drumrack.com	154
Drums n' Moore	www.drums-n-moore.com	154
Drums On Sale		170
Drumsmith.com	www.drumsmith.com	169
DrumWorks Productions	www.drumworksprod.com	175
Dunnett Classic Drums	www.dunnett.com	171
Evans	www.evansdrumheads.com	1
Extreme Isolation Headphones	www.extremeheadphones.com	80
Vic Firth	www.vicfirth.com	45
Five Star Professional Drumshops	www.fivestardrumshops.com	25
Fork's Drum Closet	www.forksdrumcloset.com	175
Gibraltar	www.gibraltarhardware.com	32,117
Gibraltar/Gretsch	www.kamanmusic.com	141
Gibraltar/Toca	www.kamanmusic.com	122
Gretsch	www.kamanmusic.com	CV3
Hart Dynamics	www.hartdynamics.com	66
Head First	www.headfirst-online.com	79
Hollywood Custom & Vintage Show	www.vintagedrumshow.com	173
HQ Percussion	www.HQpercussion.com	68
Humes & Berg	www.humes-berg.com	97
Impact	www.impactind.com	35
Interstate	www.interstatemusic.com	150
Istanbul Agop Cymbals	www.istanbulcymbals.com	94
Istanbul Mehmet Cymbals	www.istanbulmehmet.com	16
Jake Did It	www.jakesgarage.com	98
JC's Drummin' Music Shop	www.jcdrums.com	171
Jim Payne	www.funkydrummer.com	152
Joe Morello		154
Kitano	www.kitanodrums.com	168
KOSA	www.kosamusic.com	154
L&M Music	www.lmmusic.com	84
Latin Percussion (LP)	www.lpmusic.com	23
Ludwig	www.ludwig-drums.com	CV2
Magstar Drums	www.magstardrums.com	92
Mapex	www.mapexdrums.com	14/15,85
Matt's Music Center	www.mattsmusic.com	169
Mayer Bros.	www.mbdrums.com	171
Meinl	www.meinl.de	11,13
Memphis Drum Shop	www.memphisdrumshop.com	154
Metropad	www.educationalmusicaccessories.com	171
Mr. Click	www.rockdrumming.com	113
Musician's Friend	www.musiciansfriend.com	142/143
Musictech College	www.musictech.com	82
Pacific Drums & Percussion	www.pacificdrums.com	128/129
Paiste America	www.paiste.com	3,107,169
Peace Drums	www.peacemusic.com.tw	131
Pearl	www.pearldrum.com	6/7,8/9,65,67,69
Peavey Drums	www.peavey.com	105
Percussive Arts Society (PAS)	www.pas.org	155
Pintech Electronics	www.edrums.com	127
Pork Pie Percussion	www.porkpiedrums.com	170
Power Music		166
Powerjamms	www.powerjamms.com	171
Precision	www.precisiondrum.com	170
Pro•Mark	www.promark-stix.com	57,119,130
Protection Racket Drum Cases	www.bigbangdist.com	109
Regal Tip Drumsticks	www.regaltip.com	149
Remo	www.remo.com	83
Roc-N-Soc	www.rocnsoc.com	109
Roland	www.rolandus.com	36/37,151
RTOM/Moongel	www.rtom.com	152
Rudiments For DrumSet		170
Rupp's Drums	www.ruppsdrums.com	152
Russ Moy		168
Sabian	www.sabian.com	71
Sam Ash Music	www.samash.com	110/111
Sam Barnard's Drum Wrap	www.sambarnard.net	168
Samson (Slicknut)	www.slicknut.com	168
SEPdrums/Gear Head Music	www.gearhead-music.com	80
Sex Cymbals Calendar	www.provideoproduction.com	98
Shure Brothers	www.shure.com	93
Slug Percussion	www.slugdrums.com	168
Sonor Drums	www.hohnerusa.com	77
Sunlite Drums	www.sunlitedrum.com	135
TA Drums	www.tadrums.com	152
Talent 2000	www.talent2k.com/	154
Tama	www.tama.com	26/27,91,100/101,148
Taye Drums	www.taye.com	123
The Drum Pad	www.thedrumpad.com	152
The Duallist	www.theduallist.com	169
The JingleMute/Pernan Percussion	www.jinglemute.com	2
The Original Drum Screen	www.drumscreen.com	154
The Rythmic Arts Project	www.traponline.com	138
Toca	www.tocapercussion.com	134
Treeworks	www.treeworkschimes.com	34
Trick Percussion	www.trickdrums.com	152
Turkish Cymbals	www.turkishcymbals.com	118
Vater Percussion	www.vater.com	31,81,154
VeriSonic	www.4ddai.com/vs	24
Virtual Drummer School	www.virtualdrummerschool.com	140
Waddell's Drum Center	www.waddellsdrums.com	32
Warner Bros. Publications	www.warnerbrospublications.com	137
West L.A. Music	www.westlamusic.com	136
Wuhan Cymbals & Gongs	www.universalpercussion.com	122
Yamaha	www.yamahadrums.com	19,78
Yamaha (Band & Orchestra)	www.yamahadrums.com	153
Zildjian	www.zildjian.com	21,68,CV4
Zoro	www.zorothedrummer.com	154

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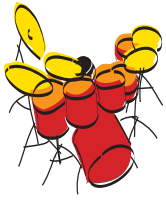

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